

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

A BOY OF BUSINESS ;
OR, HUSTLING FOR THE DOLLARS. *By A SELF-MADE MAN.*
AND OTHER STORIES



Harry had just seized one of the bags of gold coin, and was about to lift it out of the chest, when he heard a noise and glanced around. Three masked men were stealthily approaching him from the open doorway.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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A Boy of Business

OR, HUSTLING FOR THE DOLLARS

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.—Harry Gets Busy.

"What are you doing to that old flat-boat, Harry?" asked Sam Sanders, looking down on his friend from the top of the low bank on the east side of Snake River, a fairly wide stream in one of our Western States.

"Tinkering it up," replied Harry Haywood, pausing with a hammer in one hand and a piece of wood in the other.

"What for?" asked Sam, curiously.

"Business."

"Business!" exclaimed Sam, in some astonishment.

"Exactly. Keep a thing for seven years and it's bound to come in handy, my mother used to say."

"What are you going to put it to?"

"The same that my father did before the ferryboat went into commission and put him out of business."

"What, to carry goods and passengers across the river between the village and Chestertown?"

"Just so."

"You're crazy. Who'll patronize your old barge in preference to the ferryboat?"

"I figure that most everybody will, or who wants to get their goods across the river."

"Why, what's the matter with the ferryboat?"

"Haven't you heard the news about her?"

"No."

"She's out of business."

"How is that?" asked Sam, much surprised.

"You know Jake Mullen?"

"Sure I know him. He's been engineer of the ferryboat since the craft began running. It's a wonder he's held his job, though, for he's a regular lush."

"He has been fired once or twice and taken back again, but yesterday he was discharged for good and all."

"Well, the man who owns the boat can get another engineer easily enough. The bouncing of Mullen won't put the ferry out of business."

"It has, just the same."

"Maybe for a trip or two."

"No, for good."

"I don't see why it should."

"Did you hear the explosion early this morning?"

"What explosion?"

"Aboard the ferryboat."

"No. Did the boiler blow up?"

"No. Jake sneaked aboard the boat before daylight, after laying the watchman out on the wharf, and dropped a dynamite bomb in the engine room, wrecking the machinery and tearing the boat almost to pieces. She's lying now in ten feet of water beside the wharf."

"The dickens you say. This is the first I've heard about it. Was Mullen arrested?"

"Not that I've heard of. The constables were looking for him at the last accounts."

"I guess I'll go around and take a look at the boat."

"You've got lots of time to do that. Do you want a job?"

"Doing what?"

"Helping me to put this boat in shape for immediate use, and afterward to assist me in running it back and forth across the river."

"Sure I'll help you. Is there anything in it for me?"

"Of course. I'll give you a dollar a day at the start, and if the thing goes I'll raise the ante."

"I'm on, but I won't charge you anything for helping you make the repairs."

"Nonsense! This is a business proposition, not a question of friendship. I have to hire somebody, and I'd sooner it would be you than anybody else."

"When do you want me to start in?"

"Just as soon as you've gone around to the wharf and satisfied your curiosity."

"Then I'll go right away."

"You'd better, but don't say anything about my ferry scheme. I intend to make a public announcement when I'm ready."

"When do you expect to be ready?"

"In a few days. We've got to get this craft out of water and turn her over so we can caulk her."

"We can't do that. She's too heavy and awkward."

"I think we can manage it," replied Harry, confidently.

"I don't see how."

"When you get back you'll learn my plan."

Sam had his doubts about the success of any plan that his friend could suggest. However, he knew Harry Haywood was pretty smart, so he didn't express his sentiments on the subject, but hurried away to see the wreck of the ferryboat. When Sam got back he found a wagon standing on the bank, with a windlass and a

quantity of stout rope in it. Harry was helping the driver unload.

"Take off your jacket, Sam, and lend a hand," said Harry.

Sam promptly obeyed, and the rope and windlass were presently on the turf. The wagon then drove off. The windlass having been placed in its proper position, with relation to the flat-boat, Harry produced four pointed hardwood stakes and a large mallet.

"What are you going to do with those stakes?" asked Sam.

"Brace the windlass with them so that it will stand firm when pressure is brought to bear on it. Now hold that stake there and keep it upright while I drive it down," said Harry.

Sam did so, and the stake was driven two-thirds of its length into the ground. The other three stakes were driven in the spots indicated by the boss of the job. Harry took the end of one coil of rope and directed Sam to take the end of the other coil.

"Follow me aboard the boat," said the former.

The boys jumped down on the narrow strip of beach and stepped on the craft.

"You see, I have nailed two cleats on the outside of the bulwark, one toward the bow end and one aft, here. Now make a sailor's knot, like this," and Harry illustrated what he meant.

Sam, after one or two failures, produced the knot.

"Place yours over yonder cleat, this way, and then haul taut, thus," said Harry.

Sam followed directions successfully.

"Now, with the rope in our hands, we will return to the bank," said Harry.

He hitched the two ends of the rope to the windlass, and shoving the working bar into one of the holes made two complete revolutions around the machine, which wound the rope tight.

"I see how you expect to lift the boat," said Sam, "but I don't believe we are strong enough to force the windlass around."

"No, we're not," replied Harry.

"Then, where are you going to get your motive power from?"

"I own a horse, you know, and he will do the work."

"Good enough," said Sam.

"I'm going for him now, and while I'm away you can separate some of that oakum in the bag and have it ready for use, for it won't take long to lift the boat on its side and tilt it over against the bank."

Sam got on the job and Harry started off for his home, a short distance away, a small cottage surrounded by ten acres of ground, where his elder sister kept house for him and a younger sister. Just beyond the cottage, on the opposite side of the road, was an old rambling roadhouse.

It was kept by a man named Blake, who lived there with his wife and a skinny-looking hired boy, who helped around the place. The road proper swung around the side of the house and went straight to the village, which was only half a mile away.

The roadhouse had always been the halting place for the farmers and others going to and from the village. When William Haywood in-

stituted his antiquated ferry service he opened up a continuation of the road to the bank of the river and built a small wharf at the end of it, but when a small ferryboat was put on between the village and Chestertown on the other side of the river, and his flat-boat was no longer patronized, that short section of road ceased to be traveled upon and grass began to reappear in patches upon it, and this was its present condition. In the course of half an hour Harry reappeared with the horse and a light wagon. In the wagon were several articles, the most important of which was a tar kettle, partly filled with the compound in a solid form.

Another article consisted of three poles joined together at the top in a loose way by a riveted chain, and from the center depended a short length of chain to which was attached an iron hook for suspending the kettle over a fire.

Harry unloaded his wagon without any help from Sam, and then set up the three-legged affair in a suitable spot. Then he called on Sam to gather some firewood to put under the kettle. While Sam was so employed, Harry took the horse out of the shafts and harnessed him to the windlass bar. He next drove two stakes in the beach near the side of the boat to prevent the craft from sliding when the strain was brought on her outer bulwark. The duty of keeping the fire going to liquify the tar being left to Sam, Harry started the horse on his circular course around the windlass. The two ropes tautened over the edge of the bank, and the outer side of the flat-boat slowly rose out of the water, the inner side remaining comparatively stationary against the two stakes. The ropes were strong enough to sustain the weight of the unwieldy craft, and so everything went well with the enterprise. Sam occasionally walked over to the edge of the bank to take note of the progress of the work, and its success was so evident that he mentally admitted that his friend had a great head, mechanically considered. The flat-boat finally reached an upright position and the strain on the ropes ceased.

A few more turns of the windlass sufficed to pull it over so that the top bulwark fell over on the bank. Harry then unshipped the horse and reharnessed him to the wagon. He handed Sam the caulking tools once used by his father and set him at work caulking the seams of the flat-boat. While Sam was thus engaged he went down to the wharf and started to make sundry needed repairs there. When noontime came he sent Sam home to get his dinner and proceeded with the caulking himself. By the time his friend got back the bottom of the boat was ready for an application of the tar, and he set Sam at this work, while he drove home to get his own dinner. When the caulked seams had been all tarred, the boat was left to dry awhile, after which they shoved it over into an upright position and then lowered it by unwinding the windlass into the water.

The water was not overdeep at this point on the shore, and by removing their lower garments and wading in they easily pushed the boat over to the wharf, where it was made fast. The windlass, rope and tools were then loaded into the wagon and the boys drove to Harry's cottage, their work over for the day.

CHAPTER II.—The Projected New Ferry.

"What kind of motive power are you going to use?" asked Sam.

Harry's father, in his time, had ferried the boat across by means of a sail and poles in the hands of two stout men. That, however, was a very primitive method, and his son had no idea of resorting to such means of locomotion. Early that morning, when he learned of the wrecking of the ferryboat, and the idea of starting a temporary substitute to carry passengers and farm produce over to Chestertown occurred to him, the first thing he had done was to consider how he could propel the flat-boat to and fro across the stream without resorting to the old-fashioned methods pursued by his father. There was only one way that he could see, and that was to put a small engine in the boat and install a pair of small paddle-wheels.

A propeller would not do, as it would necessitate the boat being turned around after each trip, while paddle-wheels would work both ways as well as not.

Harry knew where he could get both the engine and the paddle-wheels for a fraction of their cost. A few weeks before a small craft, propelled by an engine and paddle-wheels, had run on a rock on the village side of the river on a foggy afternoon and the owner, not caring to go to the expense of getting her off and repair her had advertised her for sale at a bargain. Nobody seemed to want the wreck, and she had lain on the rock ever since.

The owner, however, had removed the engine to a machine shop in Chestertown, where Harry had seen it on sale two days before. The boy visited the wreck after breakfast, and making sundry measurements, decided that the shaft connecting the paddle-wheels would just fit the flat-boat. So he decided to buy the engine and the wreck as it stood.

He rowed across the river, saw the man who owned the shop where the engine was, who was authorized to dispose of the vessel for a mere song, and the engine at a price that Harry was willing to pay for it. The boy put up a small deposit on his purchase and then bargained with the machinist to equip his flat-boat with both the engine and the paddle-wheels and put the equipment in working order.

The man said he would send two men over on the following morning to get out the paddle-wheels, place them on the flat-boat and pole that boat across the river to a place where the job could be properly attended to. Harry had then returned to the village and started to fix the flat-boat up as we have seen.

In reply to Sam's question he explained the arrangements he had made, and Sam thought the plan a bang-up one.

"How much is it going to cost you to fit the boat up?" he asked.

"Not a whole lot. It wouldn't pay me to lay out much on that flat-boat, although I will enjoy the monopoly of the ferry business until a new ferryboat is built and put on, which won't be soon, for from what I heard around the wharf this morning, I judge that Jason, the owner of the late ferry, is ruined by the loss of his boat, which wasn't half paid for."

"Somebody else might go into the business," said Sam.

"I don't imagine they will if I can accommodate the people on this side with my boat, no matter how odd a craft she may look. It costs a lot of money to build even such a small ferryboat as Jason had, and though he supplied a real want and a growing one, I don't believe he made much money. He was under considerable expense running the boat, and he had scarcely any traffic between nine and five."

"Who's going to run the engine on your boat?" asked Sam. "That will cost you something."

"I'm going to run it myself."

"You're not an engineer."

"It doesn't require an engineer to run that engine. The machinist showed me how to operate it. It's as easy as rolling off a log. I can show you how to run it, too."

"Will you?" said Sam, eagerly. "I should like that first-rate."

"You'll get the hang of it in fifteen minutes, and with a little experience you'll be able to run it with your eyes shut."

Sam thought it would be great fun to run a steam engine, and he declared that it would be just like finding money to get a dollar a day for doing it.

"You'll change your mind about that after the novelty has worn off," said Harry. "However, we'll run it by turns and then you won't get tired of it so soon."

Sam reported at the Haywood wharf at eight o'clock next morning and found Harry already on hand, making some final repairs to the boat. At half-past eight the two men came over in a boat from Chestertown to take the shaft and paddle-wheels out of the wreck. Harry and Sam took them aboard the flat-boat, which they poled down to the rock, and helped them with the job. When the articles were landed aboard of the boat they poled across the river to the spot designated by the men and left her in charge of the artisans.

It cost Harry twenty cents to get himself and his companion back to the village wharf, where they found several farm men in a great stew because they had not been able to get their garden truck across the river to the market.

Harry told them there would be a boat running regular trips again in a few days, but that it wouldn't be large enough to take their wagons. The wrecked ferryboat had been able to carry two wagons across the river at once, which had been a great accommodation to the farmers; now, however, a wagon could not get over under any circumstances.

Two small sloops had been pressed into service, but their owners took advantage of the situation to charge a stiff figure to carry merchandise, and that raised a howl, too. The farm men decided that it wouldn't pay to tranship their stuff at the figure asked, and they drove off around the village, selling their vegetables at any reasonable price they could get. Butter, eggs and crates of poultry were sent over on the sloops, the owners of which had to put up with a shrinkage in their usual profits.

Harry and Sam put in the day breaking up the wrecked steamer the former had bought and carrying the wood to the Haywood cottage in the light wagon where it was piled up in a corner

of the yard. They took a load of iron ballast out of the hold, which Harry proposed to carry over to Chestertown some time and sell to a junk man. It was growing dark when they started for the cottage with their last load. Their way lay along an unbeaten track close to the river. Trees and thick bushes grew on one side, while the water rolled slowly along in the gathering dusk on the other side. The boys were talking about the new ferry project and speculating about the profit that probably was in it with the little expense it would cost to run it. Suddenly three men jumped out into the road. They had handkerchiefs tied across their faces under their eyes as a partial disguise, but for all that both of the startled lads recognized the burly chap who stopped the horse as Jake Mullen. The others were strangers to them.

"Get down out of that seat!" cried Mullen, waving a stick in his disengaged hand.

"What do you fellows mean by holding us up in this way?" demanded Harry.

"Get down or we'll pull you down!" roared Mullen.

His two companions approached the wagon on either side, in a menacing way.

"Pick up a stick of wood and jab the chap on your side," whispered Harry to Sam. He reached for a long stick himself.

"If you rascals attack us we'll give you all that's coming to you," said Harry, flourishing his stick.

"You bet we will!" cried Sam, making a lunge at the man on his side, causing the fellow to draw back.

"Yank 'em down!" shouted Mullen.

The men, however, showed a wholesome respect for the sticks in the hands of the resolute lads, and they hesitated coming within reach of a blow.

"Yah!" snorted Mullen. "Where's your sand? They ain't nothin' but kids."

The man on Harry's side, seeing the boys' attention momentarily directed at Mullen, made a sudden rush. But Harry was not taken off his guard. He stepped back on the footboard and swung his stick down in a quick, sweeping blow. It took the man on the side of the head and laid him out in the dust. The other man, in the meanwhile, worked around to the rear of the wagon and tried to get up there.

Sam stepped over the boards and gave him a clin that made his head ring. Then Harry put in the finisher. He stepped forward suddenly and struck at Mullen. The rascal put up his arm to ward off the blow, and received a numbing crack on the wrist that caused him to utter a string of imprecations and release his hold on the horse's bridle rein in order to rub his injured hand. Harry saw his advantage and was quick to avail himself of it. He made a second swing at the rascal, causing him to start back out of reach.

Dropping the stick on the pile, he unwound the reins from his left wrist and shouting to the horse, gave him a crack with the loose end of the reins. The animal started forward so suddenly that Sam lost his balance and tumbled into the road.

He was not hurt, fortunately, and as Harry and the wagon dashed out of the reach of the rascals he scrambled on his feet and, eluding the grasp of one of the men, put after the wagon

at top speed, shouting to his friend to ease up. The three ruffians followed in hot pursuit, but Sam swung himself up behind on to the vehicle as Harry slowed down, and snatching up a stick held them off while his friend gathered headway once more.

CHAPTER III.—Midnight Intruders.

"That's the time those rascals got left," said Sam, gleefully, looking back at the discomfited ruffians who had come to a stop in the middle of the road.

"Mullen has got in with a couple of fellows as bad as himself. They must be in desperate need to attack a couple of boys like us with a wagon load of old lumber," said Harry.

"Maybe their object was to steal the wagon and make their escape from the neighborhood on it," said Sam.

"I guess you've hit it. Had they succeeded they could have sold the boards for a couple of dollars to somebody in need of fire wood," said Harry.

"And when they reached a good-sized town they'd have sold the horse and wagon and you'd have a hard job tracing them."

"Probably I never would have got them back. It's lucky we escaped from the scoundrels."

"You can bet it is."

The wagon rolled up to the lane of the Haywood property and Sam got down and opened the gate for Harry to drive through. Promising to be on hand in the morning, he went home. Supper was waiting for our hero, and he went in to it, after putting the horse in the barn. It was dark by that time. After the meal there were a lot of chores for him to attend to, so that it was after nine when he went up to his room to turn in. He didn't feel very sleepy, notwithstanding the busy day he had had. The night was a fine one and he sat down beside the open window and began thinking over his ferry scheme which was ever present in his mind.

He was certainly a boy of business, for he hadn't wasted a moment in getting on the job as soon as its possibilities occurred to him. There was a certain risk in it, of course—the possibility of somebody else with more money securing a larger flat-boat, fitting it up with a bigger engine, putting it on the Jason route and running him out.

Any boat that would be capable of taking aboard even one loaded farm wagon at a time would have the bulge on him, and he would have to shut up shop as a ferryman. Harry was working on a few hundred dollars his late father had left him in addition to the small farm. His elder sister had \$500 banked in her own name, but Harry had no thought of asking her for the loan of any part of it. He was satisfied to do the best he could with his own resources.

He was a born hustler, and he meant to apply his talents in that direction to any business enterprise he associated himself with. Farm work had never appealed to him, and only that his sisters looked upon the little farm as their home he would have offered it for sale and dug out for a city, where he believed he could expand himself to greater advantage than in the country. He employed a faithful old hired hand to look after

the farm and this left him free to some extent to turn his attention to something else. Having tackled the ferry project, he intended to put it through unless some unforeseen and insurmountable obstacle prevented him.

Although he proposed to start in a small and modest way, as befitted his limited capital, his idea was to increase his facilities as soon as he could, with the ultimate object of possessing even a better boat than Jason had lost, and holding the undisputed monopoly of ferry service between the growing village and Chestertown across the river.

Once he reached that point he would have a mortgage on the future and would be able to control the traffic between the two places, and this traffic was certain to grow with the passage of time. Harry thought the question all over as he sat by the open window, but in the midst of his airy castles he fell asleep.

Two hours passed away, and then he woke with a start.

"Gracious! I've been asleep in this chair. I ought to have gone to bed and done my thinking there. I wonder what time it is?" he said to himself.

As if in answer to his question, the clock downstairs struck slowly twelve times.

"Midnight, eh? I have slept more than two hours. It is high time that I—hello! who are those men and what are they doing on my farm?"

The last part of the sentence was drawn from him by the sight of three men coming from the back of the barn, one hundred feet away.

"By George!" he exclaimed, after taking a good look at the trespassers, "I believe they are the three rascals Sam and I encountered down by the river this evening. Nobody else would be likely to pay us a visit at this hour. Their purpose in coming here can't be a good one. Mullen may be bent on getting square with me for getting the better of him and his associates. He is a revengeful scoundrel. He showed what he is capable of in that direction by destroying the ferry-boat because he was discharged. It's a good thing, after all, that I did go to sleep in this chair. I wouldn't have woke up so suddenly if I'd been in bed, and then these fellows would have a clear field to carry out any purpose they have in view. Well, I'll try and put another spoke in their wheels, and give Mullen reason for believing that I'm not an easy mark to monkey with."

Harry got up, took a revolver out of his drawer, walked softly downstairs and left the house by the front door. He climbed over the fence into the field on the right and walked back toward the barn. The three men were standing in front of the big door and one of them, whom he believed was Mullen, was working at the lock.

Harry believed they had first made an attempt to get in at the back, but had failed. There was a small, square trap in the rear through which the manure was dumped. It worked inward on hinges, and was always kept closed at night by means of a heavy wooden bar resting in staples. Harry supposed they had tried this and discovered that they could not force it. There were also two rear windows in the loft, but these were high up and also kept shut and secured on the inside at night.

Harry approached the barn from the back, the

same way as the interlopers had, and he intended to creep around to the front corner and watch the rascals from that point. If they broke the padlock on the front door he intended to hold the fellows up at the point of his pistol.

Reaching the back wall of the barn he followed it, resting one hand on it as he walked. When his hand rested on the trap door it gave under the pressure.

"Thunder! This opening wasn't secured by John as usual to-night. I wonder how those rascals failed to get on to the fact? They could have easily got into the barn and done a lot of damage, maybe set fire to it, and I wouldn't have suspected their presence. Well, I must get in and fasten it and then watch those chaps from one of the loft windows," he said.

He pushed the flap up and crawled into the barn. He found the bar close by and put it in the staples. Then he started for the stairs leading up to the loft. His foot was on the first step when he heard a snap outside the door. It struck him at once that the intruders had broken the lock. If so there was nothing to bar their entrance—that is, nothing but himself and his revolver. He stopped where he was and awaited developments. They came immediately. One side of the big door was opened and the three rascals led by Mullen started to file inside. Then Harry, without giving any warning, fired at the ex-engineer's arm. The bullet tore a hole through his jacket and grazed his skin. The rascals were thrown into a big panic and tumbled outside in a hurry.

Harry fired again, but did no damage to them. He rushed to the door and caught sight of their retreating figures scurrying down the lane toward the road.

"I guess I've settled their hash for to-night," he muttered. "They won't trouble us any more. The surprise I gave them must have frightened them out of their boots. I don't wonder, for it came like a stroke of lightning out of a clear sky."

He got a hammer and some stout nails and made the door fast again. Then he returned to the house and went to his room.

CHAPTER IV.—Husting For the Start.

He went to bed and was not disturbed again that night. The next morning he related the incident to the hired hand and to his sisters, at breakfast. The latter were not a little startled. In telling his story, Harry said he was not sure whether Mullen had visited the place to set fire to the barn out of revenge, or whether the men's purpose was to steal the horse and wagon to facilitate their departure from the county.

When Sam arrived, Harry told him, too, about the visit they had had from Mullen and his companions, and the warm reception he had given them.

"Gee whiz! You handed it to them good," said Sam, in a tone of satisfaction. "I'll bet they got the shock of their lives."

"They dusted out like men who did not stop on the order of their going," laughed Harry.

"I wish I'd been here to see the fun."

"I don't know as there was any fun in it. The

whole thing was pretty serious, from my point of view, and in the end from theirs, too."

Harry borrowed a rowboat and crossed the river to see how matters were progressing with the flat-boat. Of course, Sam went with him, for he was almost as much interested in the ferry scheme as his friend. They found that the shaft and paddle-wheels were in place and everything ready for the placing of the engine in position. One of the workmen told him that the engine would be brought down that morning and that the boat would be ready for him probably by night. When the boys returned to the other side, Harry, after arranging for wharfage facilities at the small dock adjoining Jason's, visited the office of the weekly newspaper, which was to go to press that night and inserted an advertisement calling attention to his ferry service between the village and Chestertown, which would go into effect on the following Monday morning. He also gave an order for some hand-bills, reading as follows:

TAKE NOTICE, EVERYBODY!

On and after Monday, May 16th, a regular ferry service between this village and Chestertown will be put in effect. The undersigned has fitted up a flat-boat, with steam power, and it will make regular trips on every week day, as follows:

From Carter's Wharf, *6.30, 7.30, 8.30, 9.30, 11 a. m.; 1, 3, 4.30, 5.30 and 6.30 p. m.

From Tupper's Wharf (Chestertown), 7, 8, 9, 10 a. m.; 12 noon; 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 p. m.

Fare 5 cents. Merchandise and crated garden truck, poultry, eggs, etc., carried at reasonable rates. Vehicles not taken.

HARRY HAYWOOD, *Proprietor*.

* Leaves Haywood's wharf, 6.15 a. m.

Sam's younger brother was engaged to get the hand-bills from the printer early on the following day and circulate them throughout the village. As it would be necessary to protect his engine, as well as his passengers and freight from the weather, Harry had figured on enclosing the former in a sort of box compartment, provided with a small door, which could be locked, while the whole boat was to be provided with a roof, resting on upright poles, the sides and ends to be provided with canvas which could be let down when necessary. The wood obtained from the wreck would answer for the roof and engine house, and Harry hired a carpenter to help them do the work on the following day, when the boat was its wharf.

"By the way, how are you going to guide the boat across the river without a rudder?" asked Sam, as late that afternoon they started across to see if the craft was finished.

"One of us will have to guide it with a pole, which won't be a difficult matter," replied Harry. "As soon as things get to running I'll probably hire a man to act as general deck hand, and he will attend to that duty."

"I'm afraid the people will give our ferryboat the laugh when they see it," said Sam.

"They're at liberty to smile as much as they please, but one thing is certain, they'll find it the only cheap and regular way of spanning the river," answered Harry. "They'll soon wake up

to the benefit of the service, and then it won't seem so funny to them. Ever since Jason's boat was destroyed there has been an awful howl over the inadequate facilities and the rates charged by the boatmen for taking passengers and small amounts of freight over to Chestertown. The village is now in the position of a city with a big street car strike on. The river boatmen take the same advantage that the express wagon men do in that case, and charge exorbitant rates. Some of the boatmen are asking a quarter to take a person across. The cheapest price is ten cents in a little rowboat. The owners of the sloops who are able to carry a small amount of freight are standing people up for all they can get. Very little garden truck has gone over to Chestertown this week and the prices have gone up in that town owing to the shortage in the supply."

"How are you going to manage with that stuff?" asked Sam. "You can't take a wagon aboard."

"What did my advertisement and hand-bills say? 'Crated garden truck carried at reasonable rates.' That's the way it will have to go."

"How are the farmers going to get it to market from the wharf on the other side? They'll have to pay for carriage, and they'll kick."

"They'll have to make the best of the situation. They'll either have to patronize my boat or stop shipping. I'll bring the empty crates back free."

"They might combine and start a new ferry company themselves."

"They will in a ram's horn! The only thing they would be at all likely to do would be to club together, buy a big flat-boat and hire hands to pole it over and back with the wagons in the morning."

"Don't you think that would pay them in the long run?"

"That is a matter for them to figure out themselves. I'm not going to suggest it to them. If I hear of them considering the matter I'll send out a hint that a duplicate of Jason's boat will soon be on the job and then they'll hesitate about starting such a scheme."

"Aren't you afraid that some enterprising moneyed individual will go in with Jason and start the regular ferry up again?"

"No, I don't believe anybody would assume a share of his debts on the showing his books will give. The only assets he's got left are the franchise and the wharf rights. His creditors will try to sell the former at any rate. When they advertise it at public auction I'm going to bid on it. If I secure it I'll be all hunky-dory. I don't believe there will be many bidders for it," said Harry.

"Then you intend to build up a permanent ferry if you can?"

"Sure thing! There'll be good money in it one of these days. Jason made a living, even with all his expenses, of which a big mortgage on his boat was one."

"How will the builders get their money now?"

"The insurance, which they hold, will probably see them through. If it isn't enough they'll hold Jason for the difference. He had to furnish a bond as well as a mortgage. Of course, if he could raise some capital he might be able to get the manufacturers to build him a new boat, but

from what I have heard he's through with the business."

The boys landed at the wharf on the other side and found that the flat-boat was all ready to go into commission. The man in charge of the craft had seen them coming and started to get steam up for a trial trip to the village side of the river. He wanted to know how the boat was to be guided and Harry explained. The two poles his father had used were on board, so as soon as steam was up, which didn't take long on such a small engine, the boat was started out into the river. The machinery worked first-rate, and the boat went along much faster than the boys supposed such a square-nosed craft could be driven. Of course, she would not make as good speed when well loaded down.

At any rate, Harry was delighted with the performance of the boat, and he believed he would soon be able to repay himself for the amount he had laid out on it. During the trip the man gave Harry additional instructions on running the engine and attending to the different parts of the not very complicated machinery, and Sam paid careful attention to his talk also.

Harry accepted the boat and settled the balance of the bill in full. Sam then rowed him back in the small boat, and Harry waited till he got back.

"We'll have to watch the boat by turns to-night, Sam, for I don't want any straggler in this neighborhood monkeying with the engine," said Harry.

"All right, I'm willing to help you out," replied Sam.

"Then go home now and get your supper and come back. I'll leave you in charge till midnight. You'd better bring your brother back with you for company."

Sam returned with his brother about half-past six, and Harry went home, had his supper and then saddled his horse and rode to the village. He called on the postmaster to see what arrangements he could make about carrying the mail twice a day. He was referred to the Chestertown postmaster.

He put up his horse, crossed the river in a boat and called on the town postmaster at his home. The official, who had been sending the mail over by one of the sloops, agreed to make an experimental arrangement with him if he would furnish a small bond for the faithful performance of the contract.

"You will have to call for and deliver the mail bags at both post-offices, you understand, and you will be held strictly responsible for them while in transit," said the postmaster. "That's why it will be necessary for you to give a bond."

"Of course," replied Harry. "I guess I can get the bond you want."

The postmaster furnished him with a blank on which to make out his application for the job, and a printed bond to fill out and have signed by a responsible person acceptable to the post office authorities. When the boy got back he called on the cashier of the village bank, who was an old friend of his family, and asked him if he would go on the bond, after telling him all about his ferry scheme. The gentleman willingly complied, and Harry then forwarded both papers to the Chestertown postmaster. As he wished to get a little sleep before he went on

watch at midnight, he returned home, set his alarm clock for twelve o'clock and went to bed.

CHAPTER V.—Ready for Business.

Harry made his appearance at the boat at about half-past twelve.

"Anybody been around?" he asked Sam.

"No, not a soul. This is about as lonesome a spot as I know, either by day or night."

"I was afraid that Jake Mullen and his friends might intrude on you. However, I notified the head constable this evening that I believed they were still hanging around the outskirts of the village, and he told me he would send two of his deputies to look for them."

"I suppose you told him of the run-in we had with the rascals, and the visit they paid you last night?" said Sam.

"Of course. Well, go home now and get to bed so you'll be able to show up in the morning around nine o'clock, at any rate."

Sam and his brother started off and were soon out of sight. Harry took his seat on a box with his back against the engine and his face toward the shore. He had a long watch before him and he didn't fancy it much, but he regarded it as a necessary duty. He couldn't afford to take the chances of leaving his property unguarded, especially as he feared that Mullen and his companions were still in the neighborhood.

Sam hadn't exaggerated the lonesomeness of the locality. Haywood's Wharf was nearly half a mile from the village and the nearest house was Harry's own cottage, a quarter of a mile up the road. There were few lights to be seen in Chestertown at that hour of the night, and as the sky was not clear the landscape was smothered in gloom. The Snake River rolled languidly along like a wide streak of ink, while shoreward the trees nodded their heads under the influence of the night wind.

The weather was fairly warm, so Harry was not uncomfortable as he sat and listened to the familiar sounds of insect life that one hears at that season of the year in the country. After awhile he found it hard to keep awake without somebody to talk to, so he stepped on to the narrow beach at the head of the wharf and walked up and down for a good half hour.

He was about to return to the boat when the sound of approaching voices reached his ears. He couldn't imagine who was coming that way at two o'clock in the morning. Possibly the constables were looking for the three rascals, or maybe the ruffians themselves. Harry deemed it prudent to crouch down under the low wharf and not show himself until he had ascertained the identity of the visitors.

The voices came nearer and then he was sure that he recognized Mullen's hoarse tones. He pulled out his revolver, fully determined to make matters hot for the rascals if they attempted to board the boat.

"You're right, Beaseley," he heard Mullen say. "The boys have brought the old scow back and it's moored to the wharf. So Haywood has had her made into a ferryboat, with a steam engine and paddle-wheels to drive her. Haw, haw, haw! What a crazy idea! Does he expect that she'll

take the place of the boat I smashed? Who will patronize such a ridiculous outfit?"

"If she'll go he'll find plenty of people who'll pay a dime to be carried to the other side and back," replied Beaseley.

"If she'll fill the bill till a real boat is put on then she'll suit us," said Mullen. "Since we ain't been able to steal a horse and wagon, nor even a rowboat, why, we'll just take her. It will be a picnic for us to steam down the river, even if we do go slow. We can put in at the farm houses for grub and enjoy ourselves like millionaires till we reach Phoenix. Then we'll try to sell the old thing for anything she'll bring and beat our way East on a freight train."

While he was speaking, Mullen and his pals stood looking at the metamorphosed flat-boat.

"Come on!" added Mullen, jumping aboard.

"Halt!" cried out Harry.

The startled rascals turned around and looked in the direction of the hail. All they could see was what seemed to be a head on a level with the wharf.

"Come, now, get out of here or I'll put a bullet into you chaps!" said the boy. "Get off that boat, Jake Mullen!"

"Who are you?" retorted the rascal, in an ugly tone.

"None of your business who I am."

"I know you. You're Harry Haywood. We just came here to take a look at your ferryboat. We ain't going to touch nothin'," said Mullen, edging toward the engine.

"Are you coming ashore or aren't you?" demanded Harry.

"In a moment. I want to look at the engine."

"You haven't any business looking at it. If you aren't out of that boat when I count three I'll shoot! One—two——"

"Hold on! I'm comin'."

Instead of coming he made a dash for the back of the engine. Harry saw his dodge and fired at him. The bullet hit some part of the engine and glanced off.

"Haw, haw, haw! You missed me!" laughed Mullen. "Jump aboard, you chaps, and crawl behind the engine."

"You fellows had better not, for I'm bound to hit one of you!" said Harry. "I have you covered."

The two rascals hesitated.

"It's too dangerous, Mullen," said Beaseley.

"Better come on shore and give the plan up."

Harry heard Mullen swear and denounce his pals as cowards.

"That's all right," returned Beaseley. "You're under cover, but we ain't. I don't want to run the risk of gettin' a ball between my ribs."

"That's where you're sensible," said Harry. "Clear out, both of you! If Mullen wants to stay aboard till I come after him, that's his funeral."

Beaseley and his companion, considering that prudence was the better part of valor, started to leave the wharf. Mullen, finding that they intended to desert him, hurled a volley of imprecations after them, and seeing that did no good he came from behind the engine, stepped on the wharf and followed them.

"I'll get square with you for this and other things, Harry Haywood," he hissed as he passed.

"It may not be right away, but it'll come some time."

"You ought to be thankful that I'm letting you off easy, Jake Mullen," replied the boy. "There are two constables out looking for you and if you don't get away from this neighborhood before morning you are likely to find yourself in the calaboose."

"Bah! I ain't afraid of no constables. They've been chasin' me all week, and that's all the good it's done 'em. They'll never catch me. If I had a gun I'd catch you and make you dance a different tune. You're too smart for your shoes, and one of these days you'll be took down."

"I'm glad I'm smart enough to keep an eye on you. You need watching pretty bad," said Harry.

Mullen flung an imprecation at him, joined his pals and then the three disappeared in the darkness. As soon as they were gone, Harry walked aboard the boat and took his seat, satisfied he had done a wise thing in standing guard over his boat that night.

"They'd have stolen it as sure as eggs are eggs, and gone down the river, which would have put my ferry out of business before it was started," thought the lad.

The run-in he had had with the intruders woke him up so that he did not feel sleepy again, and morning dawned before he quite expected it was due. His hired man came down about seven to watch the boat while he was at home taking his breakfast. After the meal he hitched his horse to the light wagon and loaded the vehicle with the best of the wood from the wreckage. When he reached the wharf he found the carpenter already at work putting up the uprights to which the frame of the light roof was to be attached. Soon afterward Sam appeared with his brother Billy. Harry offered Billy half a dollar to put in a part of the day before he started to distribute the hand-bills, and he eagerly accepted the offer. The wagon having been unloaded, Harry told Sam that he would leave him to show the carpenter what to do and help along the work, as he had other things to attend to. He then drove back to the cottage, left the wagon and walked to the village, where he got a boatman to take him across to Chestertown.

He called on the manager of the express company, told him about his ferry, which was to go into effect on the following Monday, and offered to make a contract with him to carry all express matter across the river.

After a talk they came to a temporary agreement, which was to be continued in case the ferry proved a success, and no better facilities were subsequently offered to the company. The express matter was to be delivered at the boat at stated times, and Harry's responsibility ceased after carrying it across and hauling it over to the company's messenger on the wharf at the other end.

Harry then purchased the canvas he needed for the protection of the boat during rainy weather, and left orders to have it prepared in suitable lengths and equipped with rollers and hoisting cords. It was to be delivered at the boat on Monday afternoon and put up while the craft lay at Tupper's Wharf, between trips. Harry then returned to his own side of the river and found that the carpenter was making good progress with his work.

That afternoon, Billy Sanders distributed the handbills and the villagers received the announcement of the resumption of a regular ferry service with much satisfaction, though they were somewhat curious about the craft that was to be put into commission. Bills were also mailed to all the farmers and people outside of the village who were likely to use the ferry, and the announcements were also tacked up in the post-office and other public places where the general public places where the general public would see them.

Harry purchased two stout chains and a pair of heavy padlocks to replace the ropes in securing the boat to his dock. Then with the engine compartment locked he guessed she did not need watching. So when he and Sam left the craft just before dark that night, which was Saturday, everything was ready for starting up on Monday morning.

CHAPTER VI.—Senator Fairchild.

Harry and Sam visited the boat next morning together, after breakfast, and found everything as they had left it.

"Well, she didn't run away during the night, I see," said Sam.

"No, but I can't afford to run the risk of leaving her unwatched at night as a regular thing. Somebody might come along and steal the canvas sides and ends when they are in place, or do some wanton damage. The boatmen who have been making a small harvest last week will lose their snap after we start up, and I don't suppose they'll feel particularly friendly towards me in consequence. Nothing would suit the majority of them better than to do my venture up, so I've got to hire a watchman to keep intruders at a distance."

"You're right. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. A watchman is an expense you'll have to put up with," admitted Sam. "Your old flat-boat looks pretty presentable now, but she'd look a lot better if she were painted up."

"That's no dream, Sam. I've got the paint and brushes at the house. I don't believe in working on Sunday, but I'm afraid we'll have to make an exception of to-day and devote our energies to the job. We'll paint the hull black, as it was before, and the rest of the woodwork a pearl gray. Any objection to giving me a hand?"

"I'm with you," said Sam.

So the paint and brushes were brought down and the boys went to work. Before noon they had applied one coat, and about three o'clock they found it had dried so that they were able to put on a second.

"I bought four small American flags, and we'll nail one at each corner in the morning," said Harry. "That will put the finishing touch on our boat. She looks all to the good since we put on the paint."

"Bet your life she does," replied Sam. "She doesn't look near as funny as I thought she would."

"The public will soon get used to her odd appearance. I'll bet there will be a crowd at Carter's Wharf in the morning to look her over, and I dare say we'll hear all sorts of comments, and many of them not very complimentary. We must expect that and pay no attention. It will wear

away, for the folks on this side have got to have some kind of ferry service, and as there isn't traffic enough yet to make a gilt-edged one pay they must put up with the best that is offered them."

"Before to-morrow night you'll have a reporter with a kodak from the Chestertown Daily News down at Tupper's Wharf taking a snapshot of the new ferryboat, and asking you all sorts of questions," grinned Sam.

"I have no objection. An illustrated story in the News will be a first-class advertisement for me. And that reminds me, I must put a standing advertisement in the News so as to keep the people of that burg posted."

"We leave here at six fifteen in the morning, I believe."

"Yes. You want to be on hand at five thirty."

"I'll be here, and so will Billy. He says he wants a job on the boat if you can find use for him."

"I can use him as a sort of deckhand. I shall want somebody to carry the mail bag to and from the boat morning and afternoon, at any rate. He will be able to do that and give a hand with any freight turned over to us."

"That's what I thought. He'll work right along for fifty cents a day and think it's fun."

"All right. Tell him I'll put him on my payroll."

The painting being completed, the boys took up the pots and started for Harry's cottage, full of expectation as to what the morrow would bring forth. After supper, Harry got out an account-book he had bought, and proceeded to enter on the debit side of it all the money he had so far expended on his ferry business. It footed up a considerable sum, and would have staggered many people on the threshold of a new enterprise, the ultimate success of which, owing to the unforeseen obstacles that might arise, was problematical.

While he was contemplating the total he had just added up he heard the rattle of a light vehicle on the road in front, together with the vocal strains of a man who seemed to be feeling pretty good. As Harry's cottage was below where the road turned off toward the village, at the corner of the roadhouse, a vehicle passing it could go nowhere but down to his private wharf, unless the driver switched off along the bank of the river, where there was no regular road, and which was a dangerous route in the dark to any one not perfectly familiar with it. The man who was in the vehicle in question, judging from his singing, was intoxicated, and Harry immediately jumped to the conclusion that he had ignored the right way and followed the abandoned extension of the road his father had opened up.

At any rate, there seemed no real reason why any one should drive down past his cottage, particularly at that hour, and Harry feared that he would fetch up in the river or get tangled up in his boat. He snatched up his hat and ran outside. It was too dark to see the vehicle or its occupant, but Harry could hear the thud of the horse's hoofs and the jerky singing of the man.

"That chap is plum off his base. I must chase after him or he and his rig may tumble into the river," he said, starting on a run toward his wharf.

The outfit was not going very fast, but still

It was covering ground at a pace that compelled the boy to put on a spurt before he caught sight of it.

"Hi, hi!" shouted Harry. "Stop!"

The man, who was lurching from side to side on his seat, paid no attention to the lad's hail. Doubtless he didn't hear it, for he was now singing at the top of his voice. Harry kept up the chase, shouting at intervals without effect. He was gradually overtaking the rig, which was a covered buggy, when the horse suddenly swerved to the left, at the head of the wharf, and rolled off at the very edge of the bank. A moment later the off front wheel slipped over into space, the buggy dipped under the driver's weight, and then Harry heard a big splash, following a sudden cessation of the bacchanalian melody. Relieved of its occupant, the buggy righted somewhat and the horse pulled it out of danger.

"My gracious! The man is in the river!" cried Harry. "I must save him if I can."

He rushed down to the wharf, unhitched the painter of his small boat from its ring and, jumping in, seized the oars and rowed in the direction he supposed the man was. The current of Snake River was not strong, and when the unfortunate inebriate came to the surface it bore his struggling and splashing figure but slowly along. The sounds guided Harry to the right spot, and he reached down and seized the man by the collar just as he was going under a second time. Securing a good hold, he tried to pull the individual into the boat.

He soon found that was an impossible job, for the stranger was a large-framed person, weighing over two hundred pounds.

"Catch hold of this boat," he said, "and I'll get you on the shore in a jiffy."

The man who had been partially sobered by his unexpected immersion in the cold water, grasped the gunwhale of the boat in a tenacious way and clung on. Harry, relieved of the necessity of holding on to him, took one of the oars and soon sculled the boat and its burden to the wharf.

"Now, then, give me your hand and try to scramble up," said the boy, gripping the stranger with his knees and reaching down.

The stranger complied, and presently had both arms thrown over the stringer.

"Hold on tight, sir," said Harry, as he stepped back into the boat. "Now lift up your right leg."

The man lifted it, awkwardly. Harry seized it and after a big effort landed it on top of the stringpiece. Then he gave the stranger a strong shove and he rolled over on the wharf. Harry secured the painter of his boat to the ring and then proceeded to help the man on his feet.

"Bad business—very bad business!" muttered the stranger, as he tried to maintain his equilibrium by holding on to the boy's arms.

"Yes, sir. If I hadn't been on hand you probably would have been drowned."

"That's right, sonny. Everlastingly obliged to you. Shan't forget favor," replied the man, in uncertain tones. "Where's my horse and buggy?" he added, as he suddenly remembered his rig. "In river, I s'pose. Too bad. Valuable horse. Belongs to my wife. When I s'plain cir—circumstances never'll hear last of it. Say, boy, can't you save that horse? Never mind buggy. Pay

you a thousand dollars if you do. My word's as good as my bond. Know who I am? Mustn't give it away. I'm Senator Fairchild. Heard of me, of course."

Harry was astonished when the stranger disclosed his identity. He had never seen the Senator before, but he had heard of him often enough to make his name familiar to his ears. He lived in a fine house on the suburbs of Chestertown, and was one of the wealthy politicians who represented the State at the Nation's Capital.

"Senator Fairchild!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, but not so loud. Somebody might hear you, and this mustn't get out or I'll be disgraced—understand? I'll pay you well for your silence."

The Senator fumbled at his vest pocket, drew out a big wad of wet bills and shoved it into Harry's hand.

"Take that and say nothing. If it isn't enough, come and see me and I'll give you whatever you ask. Money's no objection. Reputation's everything—understand, boy?"

"I don't want your money, sir. I won't say a word if you don't want this accident known," replied Harry.

"Nonsense! Keep money. You're entitled to it for saving my life. Now look for horse and I'll give you thousand dollars more," said the politician.

The Senator evidently believed that the only way to secure his rescuer's silence was to tip him heavily. He was accustomed to tipping everybody for the slightest service rendered, and moreover, he expected to be "seen" himself in a suitable way by everybody who wished an important political service from him.

"I don't believe your rig went into the river," said Harry, shoving the money into his pocket for the time being, for he saw that it would be useless to induce the portly gentleman to take it back now. He meant to return him the money later, after he had recovered from the effects of his booze and bath.

"No?" cried the Senator. "Where is horse, then?"

"The last I saw of your horse it was on the way down the river bank."

"Run after it and bring it back and I'll make it all right with you."

"Better let it go for the present till I get you up to my cottage and into bed. You're shivering, although it isn't a cold night. If you stand around here in your wet clothes you are liable to get a bad cold, maybe a touch of the pneumonia. Come on, walk along with me, and walk as fast as you can."

"But my horse will be lost. Wouldn't lose him for a million!" objected the politician.

"No, I guess not. After I get you fixed up I'll start out and look for the animal, and when I find your rig I'll bring it to my place."

"Really think you can find it?"

"Yes," replied Harry, anxious to reassure the gentleman and get him up to his cottage.

"All right. Take your word for it. I'll go with you, but you mustn't tell your folks who I am. Hope your father doesn't know me by sight."

"I haven't any father, sir, nor mother, either."

"No? Who do you live with? By the way, you haven't told me your name."

"My name is Harry Haywood. I own the cottage and farm, and my two sisters keep house for me."

"Good! They won't know me. Come on. But, remember, you mustn't say anything to anybody about this affair. I'm a member of the church and of high moral and religious character. If my constituents knew I drank more'n was good for me and made a spectacle of myself they'd be scandalized—understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"It would hurt my reputation. The papers would mention it. And my enemies would make political capital of it to weaken my influence. I gave you some money, didn't I? You call on me at my home in a day or two and I'll fix you up better. If you want a fat job I'll get you one. I'll be your friend if you will keep a stiff upper lip—understand?"

The Senator rattled on in this strain all the way to the cottage, hardly permitting the boy to get a word in edgeways. His anxiety about his reputation as a presumed sober and respectable citizen of the State was painfully manifest, and Harry did all he could to assure him that he wouldn't mention the incident to a soul. Harry's sister let them in at the front door, and was quite surprised at the bedraggled appearance of the visitor, whose somewhat pompous look, massive gold watch chain, diamond pin and other jewelry showed him to be a person above the ordinary.

"My sister, sir," said Harry, without mentioning the Senator's name.

The politician bowed in a somewhat abashed way, for he was conscious that he did not present a very handsome appearance. Harry hurriedly explained to his sister that the gentleman, being a stranger in that vicinity, had mistaken his way in the dark, driven down to the river and fallen in, owing to the slipping of the wheels of his buggy.

He had saved him and had extended the hospitality of the cottage to him for the night, so that his soaked garments would have the opportunity to dry. Harry then took the politician up to a spare chamber and apologizing because he had no clothes that would fit the gentleman, told him to disrobe, roll himself up in a blanket and get into bed.

"After I have found your rig, I'll put your horse in my barn and then I'll come and take your wet clothes away," said Harry.

"A thousand thanks, young man. You may count on my gratitude," said Senator Fairchild, effusively.

Harry bowed and retired. He went to the barn, saddled his horse and started after the Senator's outfit. He found the horse and buggy standing quietly alongside a hedge, not a great way from the scene of the accident, and tying his own animal behind the vehicle, got into the buggy and drove home.

CHAPTER VII.—The Ferry's First Day.

When he entered the spare chamber the distinguished man was fast asleep and snoring with considerable gusto. Harry took charge of his clothes and left the room. He hung them up in the kitchen.

"Press them out in the morning, sis, and send them up to the gentleman by Jim," he said. "Invite him to have some breakfast. Jim will harness his horse to the buggy. He will doubtless ask for me and you can tell him that I left the house at half-past five to look after a new venture I've just started. Say I will call on him at his home next Sunday."

Harry then went to his room and turned in. He was downstairs at five and had begun preparations for breakfast when his elder sister appeared and relieved him. At twenty minutes of six he was at the wharf, where he found Sam and his brother already on hand.

Sam had started the fire under the boiler, and the indications were that steam would soon be up. While they were getting ready to start, a wagon came driving down the road. It had a dozen crates of farm produce, four cases of eggs and a crate of live poultry.

Two men sat on the seat, one of whom Harry recognized as a farmer who lived a couple of miles out.

"Hello!" exclaimed Farmer Whipple. "Is that the new ferryboat advertised in the Gazette?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry. "It isn't the best ever, but she'll stop the gap for the present."

"Hum! How long will it take to cross the river in her?"

"About twelve minutes. She did it in ten minutes on Friday afternoon, on her maiden trip, but she was not loaded then. My time-table allows her a quarter of an hour."

"Well, I've got a lot of stuff on the wagon I'd like to have taken over. Look it over and tell me what you'll charge," said the farmer.

"They'll cost you a quarter apiece, landed on Tupper's Wharf, and the crates, if sent to the wharf empty, will be returned here free of charge," said Harry.

"Hum! You want to be paid in advance, I suppose?"

"That isn't necessary, as I know you. I can send you weekly statements if you expect to patronize my route."

"Very well. I'm going with you myself this morning, as I want to make arrangements on the other side to have my stuff carted to the market. This is rather an expensive way of doing business, but it can't be helped since the regular ferry is discontinued."

"Well, sir, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll make the crates twenty cents each, seeing that you have a load, and I may even do better after a few days if you have much stuff to ship."

"I shall have quite a bit. If you'll make it fifteen cents and return the crates free to this wharf, I'll send a load here every morning."

"All right, sir. We'll let it go at that, but you must have your wagon here not later than six, so as to give us time to load the crates on the boat and get away at fifteen minutes after."

"You only make one trip from this wharf?"

"That's all—the first in the morning."

While they were talking, Sam, his brother and the farmhand were loading the crates on the boat. Steam was up, and as soon as the last crate was on Harry told Sam to unlock the padlocks and start the boat by shoving off with the poles.

Billy lent his brother a hand, and as the boat began to move away from the wharf Harry

started the engine. The paddle-wheels began to revolve a little sluggishly at first, but as the craft got under headway they turned faster and soon the boat was running at a satisfactory speed toward the village water front.

"This is fine!" grinned Billy Sanders, evidently quite tickled over the sail.

"I didn't think such a flat-boat could be made to go so fast," said Farmer Whipple. "Not that the craft is much of a clipper, as it is, but she'll answer the purpose of a ferryboat till a better one is put on the route."

"I hope to secure the ferry franchise and put on a decent boat by and by," said Harry.

"Do you? You are evidently an enterprising young fellow."

Carter's Wharf was now in plain sight, and, as the boys had expected, there was a crowd of early birds there watching for the appearance of the new ferryboat.

They piped her off as soon as she hove in sight.

"Suffering glow-worms!" cried one man. "What do you call it?"

"Well, if that ain't the worse ever!" grinned a boatman, opposed to a regular ferry service. "It's a regular sell."

"What is it, anyway?" howled another. "A mud-scow with an engine aboard?"

"No; it's a Sunday school barge. See them flags on top?"

"So that's the new ferryboat! What a rotten bluff!" exclaimed another of the amused watchers.

"Here, gents, who's goin' to take a ride across in the new steam ferryboat, the What-is-it? Only a nickel a ride, and bring you back free!" chorused another facetious individual. "Step up before the seats are all taken."

"Seats!" roared one of the boatmen. "There ain't no seats aboard of her that I kin see. Why, it's good for nothin' but carryin' cattle. I reckon no real gent'll go in her. Bet you a dollar we don't lose no custom by her."

"We'll have to reduce our price till we run her off the river. That's the way the trusts do to kill a rival."

"Reduce nothin'. Ten cents is cheap enough. We'll carry the cream, and he kin have the cheap guys who look at a nickel before they'll spend it."

The new boat was now close in and she was met with a chorus of howls and cat-calls that made the welkin ring. The boys paid no attention to the sarcastic reception they were receiving. Harry shut off steam, the paddles ceased to revolve and the flat-boat ran up to the wharf.

Sam and Billy sprang on the wharf from each end and secured her with the mooring ropes to convenient pileheads.

"Stand out of the way, gentlemen!" shouted Sam. "You are blocking up the passage. There are a couple of hundred people behind you who want to get aboard. All aboard now for Chestertown! Land you at Tupper's Wharf in fifteen minutes or less. Fare, five cents."

"Haw, haw, haw! Listen to the barker!" laughed a boatman.

Several mechanics who worked in Chestertown pushed their way through the mob, handed a nickel each to Sam and stepped on board.

"Now then, gentlemen, step lively, anybody who is going. We'll be off in five minutes. Next boat leaves here at seven thirty."

A wagon drove on the wharf at that moment and the crowd fell back. The driver got down.

"Is that the new ferryboat?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Yes, sir. Got some freight to go across?" asked Harry.

"I've got five cases of eggs for Smith & Brewster, of Chestertown. What do you charge for taking them over?"

"One dollar for the lot."

"I'll take 'em for seventy-five cents," said a boatman.

"I'll do it for half a dollar," cried another river man.

"Shut up, Ben Day, what are you under-biddin' me for?" cried the first bidder, angrily.

"Shut up yourself! I can carry 'em for any price I chose."

"Well, you won't take them for no half a dollar in your old leaky tub!" snarled the other. "I'll punch you in the gizzard first!"

"You'll punch me in the gizzard! Well, I guess not. I'd just as soon bust you in the snoot as not!"

In another moment the two boatmen grappled and proceeded to fight it out, while an admiring throng surrounded them and cheered them on.

"Well, do you want to send your eggs over or not?" asked Harry, quietly.

"Can't you carry them for seventy-five cents?" asked the driver.

"All right. I've no time to argue, as time is up. Come up with your money and help my hands get them aboard."

The man paid the money and in a jiffy the cases of eggs were hustled on board.

"Cast off, Sam. We're three minutes behind. Pole her off."

The boat floated clear and Harry started the engine. The paddle-wheels began to revolve, but only a few of the loungers paid any attention to her departure, as all were deeply interested in the scrap going on between the two belligerent boatmen, each of whom had already drawn blood and were as mad as a pair of hatters. The boat made her run across the river inside of fifteen minutes and made fast to Tupper's Wharf. No great curiosity was shown on the Chestertown side concerning her. The passengers went ashore well satisfied, and Sam and his brother loaded the freight. A wagon was waiting to take on the five cases of eggs, and Harry delivered them to the driver, after getting a receipt in due form.

Farmer Whipple arranged with an expressman to cart his stuff to market, and the farmer was the only passenger the boat carried back when she left for the village at seven o'clock, with Sam driving the engine. Harry sat on a box and made the following entries in his memorandum-book of the receipts for his first trip:

"Freight, \$3.30; passengers, 35 cents; total, \$3.65."

When the boat made fast to the village wharf, Harry found the postmaster's son waiting with the mail bag, which he said his father had been instructed to send by the seven thirty boat every morning.

"You will send for the afternoon mail in time to carry it over at five thirty," he said. "You will get our mail at the Chestertown office when you deliver this bag on your arrival. You will

bring it over on your eight o'clock trip. Sign this paper."

Harry signed for the mail bag. He carried half a dozen passengers and some freight on his second trip, the receipts amounting to \$1.80. On his arrival at Tupper's Wharf, he chased Billy to the post-office with the mail bag, and that youth returned inside of fifteen minutes allowed him, with the bag for the village. The boat had one passenger, who made the trip out of curiosity. The eight thirty boat from the village carried the express packages and four passengers, and when she started back at nine she carried the express matter from Chestertown. The mail and express being special contracts, Harry could not figure them among his daily receipts, and his third round trip footed up only thirty cents.

He did better on his fourth trip, carrying a dozen passengers to the town. Up to this time the boat had laid only a quarter of an hour at either wharf. She returned to the village at ten fifteen, but did not start on her fifth round trip till eleven. She had a similar lay-off of three-quarters of an hour this time at Chestertown, and Harry took advantage of it to go to the Daily News office and put in his standing advertisement. While he was away the men came with the canvas sides and ends and put them upon the boat. The boat returned to the village at a quarter past twelve, and as she did not start again till one, Sam went home to his dinner and Harry to a restaurant, leaving Billy in charge. When they got back, Billy was sent to get his dinner, and the boat crossed the river without him.

He rejoined the boat when it returned at two fifteen. The express went from the village again at four, and came from Chestertown at five, and on the next round trip Harry carried the afternoon mail both ways. The last trip was made from the village at six thirty and from Chestertown at seven. The early morning passengers returned to the village on that boat, and Harry also brought Farmer Whipple's empty crates, which he carried on to his own wharf, at which he arrived at seven thirty. The fire under the boiler was dumped and the boat left in charge of the watchman Harry had hired that day.

CHAPTER VIII.—Another Night Attack.

"We didn't do so bad for our first day," remarked Sam, as the three walked up the road.

"No," replied Harry, "but we missed many passengers and quite a bit of freight because people haven't got the hang of our time-table yet. We'll do better as the time goes by. Jason wouldn't have made his salt if he carried as little freight and as few passengers as we did to-day. By the first of next week we ought to be doing three times our present business. The great trouble I'll have will be to accommodate the farmers on the first trip over. I can't possibly take all the stuff that Jason carried, not counting the passengers. I really don't know how I'll manage the matter."

"Get two or three rowboats of equal size, join them together, say a yard apart, build a platform across them, with sides to it, and use it as a tow on the first trip over, bringing it back on our last trip," suggested Sam.

"That might do. I'll consider it," replied Harry as he laid his hand on his gate, bade his friends good-night and went in to supper.

During the meal he told his attentive sisters how matters went that day with the new ferry.

"It seems to be a success," he said. "Everything went smoothly, and I expect soon to secure the confidence of the public. By the way, when did the gentleman leave this morning?"

"About half-past nine," said his eldest sister. "He asked for you, and I gave him the message you left."

"I expected to see him at the wharf, but he didn't show up. I wonder how he got his horse and buggy across the river? He may have found some craft big enough to take them."

"What is his name? He must have told you. He seems to be a gentleman of some importance."

"I couldn't tell you anything more about him, Sis, than you know already."

"But you know his name, for you're going to call on him."

"I admit it, but there are reasons why I must keep it secret."

"What reasons?" she asked, in surprise.

"Well, you see, the fact is he was under the influence of liquor last night, that's how he came to wander down to the river and fall in, and he doesn't want the fact to get out, for it would injure his reputation. Later on I may tell you who he is, but for the present you must curb your curiosity to oblige me."

Harry got out his account-book and credited his boat with the day's receipts for freight and passengers, which amounted to a little over twelve dollars. His operating expenses for the day were \$1.50 for wages and about a dollar for fuel, to which was to be added a dollar for the night watchman.

The wharf privileges would only cost him \$15 a month at each dock. So there was a profit at the start. By the end of the week he expected that his receipts would rise to \$10 a day at least, with a very slight increase in his running expenses.

Of course, his advertising would cost him something, and there would be other expenses, but he intended to keep his outgo down to the lowest point by keeping all hands, including himself, on the hustle. Until he was sure nobody else was going to start up against him with improved facilities he could not even guess how he would come out on his venture.

In fact, he would not be safe at all until he got hold of the ferry franchise, at present owned by Jason, and which would probably be absorbed by his chief creditor. If it was offered for sale, as he expected it would be, Harry meant to buy it in by hook or by crook, and thus put his ferry on a legal footing. He was now running as a freelance to accommodate the public and the mails but he did not know but he could be stopped at any time.

That was not a very cheerful reflection, and while thinking it over it suddenly occurred to him that if he brought the matter to the attention of Senator Fairchild that gentleman, having a strong political pull, could fix it all right for him. Thinking about the Senator put him in mind of the wad of money that gentleman had forced upon him and which he proposed to return at the first chance. He had not looked at

the roll since it came into his possession, as his thoughts were otherwise fully engaged, but now he took it out and counted it.

He found that it footed up something over \$600.

"He's reckless with his dough," thought Harry. "He must have loads of it to throw around. But, then, he was dead anxious to bribe me to keep silent about his condition. Just as if I'd give him away. A fellow would be pretty mean to do such a thing as that. Well, I shall return his money to him on Sunday, if I find him at home, and let him understand that I regard honorable dealing above money, and that I don't accept bribes."

Harry put the money away and went to his room. As he stood a moment by the window looking out, he distinctly heard a pistol shot coming from the direction of the wharf.

"My gracious! I believe my watchman has been attacked. I must go down and see what's in the wind," he breathed.

Taking his revolver, he rushed out of the cottage and started for the wharf on the run. In a few minutes he approached the place, and as the night was rather bright he saw several men on his boat in a bunch.

"I wonder if they are Mullen and his companions. Those rascals are mighty persistent in their efforts to injure me," he thought.

He stopped running and approached the wharf with due caution. Apparently, the rascals, whoever they were, had captured the watchman. Harry now counted four figures, and that was one more than the Mullen crowd, unless those chaps had received an addition to their ranks.

He sneaked behind some bushes and then crawled over the bank and dropped to the beach beside the wharf. At that moment the four figures picked up something and bore it on to the wharf. Harry saw they had hold of the watchman, whom they had bound and gagged.

They carried him up the wharf toward the road, and the boy had a good view of them. It was not the Mullen crowd. Harry recognized two of them as river boatmen, and one of the two as one of the fellows who had been in the scrap that morning.

He crouched beside the wharf as they passed, and as they bore the helpless watchman into the bushes he sprang lightly on the wharf and jumped on board the boat with his revolver in his hand ready for business.

"It's my opinion somebody is going to get hurt," he muttered, as he stepped behind the little house enclosing the engine.

He stepped on something, and, looking down, saw that it was the watchman's weapon. He picked it up, cocked it and held it in his left hand. A moment later the four men came hurrying back toward the boat. It was clear to Harry that these fellows intended to put the new ferry out of business.

"It's a good thing I heard that shot and got here in time to defend my property," he told himself.

"Now, then," said the leader of the bunch, "get your hatchet and smash that house, and then we'll send that engine to the junk heap."

The hatchet, however, was lying on the floor of the boat, close to where Harry stood, and in his opinion some of the intruders were going to

get hurt before they could get near it. The leader was in the act of stepping aboard, when Harry suddenly came from behind the little house, shoved both revolvers toward him and told him, in resolute tones, to get out or he'd fire. The bunch was paralyzed by his belligerent and unexpected appearance. They fell back in a hurry, with exclamations of consternation. The leader tripped over the chain holding the forward end of the boat to the wharf, lost his balance and tumbled into the river.

"Help!" he shouted, as he struck the water with a splash and then went down over his head. Harry completed the demoralization of the crowd by firing a shot over their heads. The three remaining fellows scattered and ran up the wharf, leaving their companion to his fate. Harry fired another shot after them and then looked into the water for the leader.

He was easily to be seen a few yards away, swimming the few strokes necessary to bring him to the shore. He waded out and hurried off like a person who had an important engagement elsewhere. Harry jumped on the wharf and followed. In the distance he saw the other three running up the road. The leader took to his heels and followed them.

Harry hunted around in the bushes for the watchman and soon found him. It took but a moment or two to release him, and then the young ferry boss asked him how the intruders had taken him off his guard. The watchman explained that the four men had come up and started to board the boat, when he ordered them away. The whole bunch made a dash for him, and he had just a chance to fire one shot when he was knocked down and captured.

"If you hadn't fired that shot they'd have got away with this boat. I heard the shot at my house and came down to see what the trouble was. I was right beside the wharf on the beach when they carried you up here. Then I made a flank move and got aboard the boat. When they returned I gave them a nice little surprise, and they cut and ran. The leader fell into the river, but he got out and had rejoined the bunch by this time. Here is your revolver. I guess you won't be troubled again to-night; but if you are, shoot to hit."

Harry then bade him good night and returned to the cottage.

CHAPTER IX.—Harry Calls on Senator Fairchild.

Sam and Bill stopped at the cottage next morning at half-past five and accompanied Harry to the boat. On the way, Harry told them about the attack the river men had made on his boat the night before, and the result of it.

"The blamed rascals are jealous and want to bust your business up," said Sam.

"I guess there is no doubt of that, for they didn't do much business carrying people over the river yesterday."

"Did you recognize any of them?"

"I know two of the fellows," replied Harry.

"You ought to have them arrested, then, and make an example of them."

"I don't believe I could prove anything against

them. The watchman couldn't identify them, and they'd swear they were not here."

"If you'd shot one of them in the leg you could have captured him."

"I was only too glad to get rid of them altogether."

While they were talking, Sam was getting up steam, while Harry was oiling the machinery. A load of crated garden stuff and a couple of crates of live poultry came down on Farmer Whipple's wagon and were loaded aboard. Harry checked off an itemized list, furnished in duplicate, as the crates were carried aboard, and finding that it correctly represented the shipment, signed and handed it to the driver.

"There are the crates I brought over last night," said Harry. "You can take them back with you now."

The man was loading them on the wagon when the ferryboat pulled out for her regular wharf at the village. There was no hilarious and insulting crowd this morning at Carter's Wharf to hurt the boys' feelings when the boat arrived there.

One of the village constables was standing in the neighborhood and his presence probably checked any gathering of the early birds. The same passengers, with two additions, who made the first trip on the morning before, were on hand again, and stepped on board after parting with their nickels to Sam.

Quite a bit of freight was also waiting to be taken on board. The ferry wore a prosperous look when the craft left the dock with Harry at the engine. She was five minutes late in getting away, but made up two of the minutes in transit.

This day was a repetition of the previous one, except that the boat did fifty per cent. more business, and Harry's receipts amounted to over \$17.

During one of the three-quarter of an hour waits, Harry called at the head constable's office and reported the attempted outrage of the night before. The officer told him to call on the justice and get out warrants against the two men he had recognized.

"What's the use? They'll deny their guilt, and I have no corroborative evidence to bring against them," said the boy. "I have reported the matter to let you know that if any more of those chaps come fooling around my private wharf I won't be responsible for the consequences."

On the following morning the watchman reported that he had not been disturbed by any one during the night.

"Good!" said Harry. "I guess I've taught those fellows a lesson."

When the boat returned to her roosting ground that evening a big sheet of wrapping paper, with some lettering on it, adorned a piece of wood nailed to one of the stringpieces.

"What's that?" exclaimed Sam, looking at it.

Harry stepped on the wharf and examined it. This is what he saw:

"TAKE NOTICE—Harry Haywood, you are hereby warned that if you don't take your one-hoss ferryboat off the river by SATURDAY, you will git HURT. This is no idle threat. WE MEAN BIZNESS! BEWAIRE AND TAKE WARNIN'."

A rude skull and crossbones ornamented the top and bottom, and the outline of an old-fashioned coffin was drawn on each side. Harry tore it down and handed it to Sam.

"Well, I'll be jiggered. That comes from the boatmen as sure as you live. If anybody gets hurt I'll bet it will be them," said Sam.

"We'll have to watch the boat all day Sunday," said Harry. "Those chaps mean mischief."

"They were fools to warn you, for it will put you on your guard. They must think you have no sand to try and frighten you with such a thing as that."

"This boat will continue to run in spite of all the boatmen on the river," said Harry, resolutely.

"Of course she will. You're making a good thing out of the ferry and they are mad because they can't do any business."

The watchman now showed up and Harry handed him the warning paper.

"Keep your eyes skinned and make no bones about shooting any stranger that trespasses on the dock," said the boy. "To-morrow morning I'll bring a painted sign here and put it up, warning trespassers off the wharf."

The boat was fixed for the night and the boys went home. Nothing happened to worry Harry during the rest of the week. The boat made her trips on scheduled time, and the villagers declared she filled the bill pretty good.

Harry made arrangements with the head constable to furnish two men to watch his boat on Sunday, by turns, from the time the watchman went off till he came on again. After dinner, Sunday afternoon, Harry pulled himself across the river and started for the home of Senator Fairchild.

He had to inquire his way, as he did not know where the street was on which the politician lived. He found the house at last. It was a fine one, standing back in the midst of extensive grounds with a magnificent lawn in front and on both sides. He rang the bell and when a servant came he asked if the Senator was at home.

"He is. Give me your name, please," said the servant.

"Harry Haywood."

He was shown into a reception-room.

The servant returned and told him to follow. He was taken to the library, where he found the great man reading a newspaper.

"Glad to see you, Haywood," said the Senator, effusively. "Take a seat."

The politician looked quite a different person now, arrayed as he was in fine linen and a velvet smoking jacket.

"I have called to return you a sum of money which you handed me last Sunday evening on my wharf because I rendered you a service," began Harry.

Senator Fairchild frowned and did not seem pleased.

"The service I did for you was one for which I would not think of accepting pay. You unfortunately fell into the river and it was, therefore, my duty to save you if I could. I don't take money for doing my duty, particularly when I took no risk myself. I don't know whether you remember the amount you gave me, but it was a large one—\$600, in fact. Possibly you had no

idea you were giving me so much. At any rate, I come to return it."

"But, young man, I don't wish to take it back. When I give anything that is the end of it. I did not offer you that for saving my life, for I regard my life as worth a great deal more than \$600. I handed it to you as a present," said the Senator, with a slight flush, for in his heart he knew he had given it as a bribe for Harry's silence regarding his condition.

"You will pardon me, Senator Fairchild, but your words led me to infer that you gave me that money as an inducement to hide a certain fact which I will not mention. That is all the more reason why I should return it to you. It was entirely unnecessary on your part to pay me for my silence. I should deem it a very dishonorable action on my part if I breathed a word about the unfortunate state in which you happened to be at the time the accident occurred. There is your money, and let me assure you that as far as I am concerned no one will ever learn that there was anything the matter with you last Sunday night."

Harry laid the roll of bills on the table at the Senator's elbow, and did not sit down again, as he had finished his errand. The politician looked at the money and then at his young visitor. He was a man of ready resource and a fluent talker, but for once his self-possession seemed to have deserted him. He didn't know just what to do, nor how to handle this unusual young man. Finally he motioned to the chair and Harry reseated himself.

"Young man," said the mogul, "you are something of a surprise to me. I am not in the habit of seeing people refuse anything, particularly money that is offered to them. However, I perceive that you hold sentiments that do you great honor and which I thoroughly appreciate. As a general thing, I do not meet with people whom I could trust as implicitly as I feel I can trust you. We will say no more about this money which you have thought fit to refuse. We will now talk about something else. What are you doing for a living?"

"I am running a new ferry between Riverside and this town," replied Harry.

"Indeed! I heard that three boys had started an enterprise of a temporary nature to furnish transportation across the Snake River until arrangements had been made to resume the regular ferry."

"Only one boy, and that is myself, is responsible for the enterprise in question. The other two are my assistants, and I pay them regular wages. Further, I did not start the ferry as a temporary expedient, but as a permanent thing. I expect that the franchise held by Mr. Jason will be offered, probably at auction, and I mean to buy it in, if by any means I can raise the price."

Harry's earnestness impressed the Senator. He was clearly surprised that a boy should think of securing the ferry franchise. He began questioning Harry about his ferry and about the resources he could bring to bear on improving it in the event that he got hold of the franchise. Harry admitted that his resources were now so limited that he couldn't do much in the improvement line for some time to come.

"But I intend to furnish good service, just the same, no matter how I get around it," he said.

"But, my lad, you have not the facilities for bringing over the loaded vegetable wagons of the farmers. They won't put up with your present ferryboat very long. I had a call from a committee of them yesterday. While they admitted that your ferry is doing first-rate in its way, they say that they are the sufferers, owing to the lack of a suitable boat to take their wagons over. They are compelled to pay you in transportation charges for a portion of their produce more than they paid Jason for double the accommodation. They say that they can't afford to have this thing go on indefinitely. Jason, they told me, will not resume the ferry business and they want me to interest myself in getting a reliable man to purchase the franchise and put on a new boat like the one that was destroyed."

"I am sorry to hear that there is a movement on foot to run me out," replied Harry. "While I admit that I am not filling the bill as it should be filled, I want to be allowed a fair chance to do it. I have gone into this business with all my energies, and have put all my limited capital into it. I can't afford to have it go up at this stage of the game."

"You seem to be a boy of business," smiled Senator Fairchild.

"I'm not in the ferry scheme for fun. I've got to hustle for the dollars to make it go. I've no fear about my success if I'm left alone to fight it out. Of course, if somebody else gets the franchise I'll be done up, for I'm running a ferry without any legal rights at my back. I think I'm entitled to it more than anybody else, because I've stepped into the breach and helped the people out. If I hadn't done it the people on my side of the river would still be at the mercy of the boatmen, while the farmers who made their kick to you would be twice as badly off."

The politician had to admit that the boy put up a good argument. In any event, he was predisposed towards him, for he felt that he was under great obligations to the lad.

"Suppose I secure this franchise for you, Haywood, will you accept it as an evidence of my appreciation of the service you have rendered me?" he said.

"I'd rather pay for it, sir. I don't wish to be under obligations to anybody for my success in life if I can avoid it," replied Harry.

"That's all very well, my boy, but you've got to have the franchise or be driven off the river. You are merely running on sufferance now. If your capital is practically exhausted, how do you expect to buy the franchise without help?"

"If you want to buy it for me and let me repay you by degrees for it I'll accept that as an evidence of your appreciation for rescuing you from the river."

"I'd rather make you a present of it."

"And I'd rather you wouldn't."

"You strike me as being an unusual boy. I offer to do you a favor and you turn it down as if it was of no benefit to you. Why, I have no end of people running after me to do them favors, and to most of them I am under no particular obligation at all. Men who are total strangers to me come here and expect me to use my influence in their behalf simply because, as residents of this State, I represent them at Washington.

It is really refreshing to have a visitor like yourself who has no axe to grind."

"Not being a voter yet it would be presumptuous in me to expect you to interest yourself in my affairs. But since you are anxious to do something for me, I've shown you how you can do it. Get me the ferry franchise and let me pay for it out of the profits of the business. Nobody can take the business away from me, then."

"That's true, but somebody else could make application for a franchise for an opposition line on the ground that the service furnished by you was inadequate to the needs of the people interested," said the Senator, with a smile.

"In that case I'd call on you with an axe to grind," laughed Harry.

"I'd want you to use your influence to prevent another franchise from being granted. I am satisfied that a gentleman of your political importance in this State could easily block any attempt in that direction."

Senator Fairchild laughed.

"I dare say I could, and it is quite likely that the interest I feel in you would induce me to pull the wires for your benefit. Well, to get back to the subject, I will get you the franchise and you can pay for it in any way most convenient to you. While I admire your independence, I regret that you refuse to accept any substantial recompense for the invaluable service you have done for me. This \$600, for instance, would come in very handy to you as an advance payment on a real ferryboat like the one that was lately on the route. Why not take it and use it to that end? The moment the farmers learn that a boat suitable to their needs is to be put on as soon as built they will have no further kicks coming."

"Thank you for the offer, Senator Fairchild. If I should decide that it is advisable for me to ask you for the loan of that sum for the purpose you have mentioned I will call on you. And now I will not take up any more of your time. When you have got the franchise you can let me know."

"I will. I am glad you called. I hope you will honor me with another visit soon again, for it's a pleasure to converse with such a clever young man as I have found you to be."

The politician accompanied Harry to the door himself, instead of delegating that duty to a servant, and there bade him good-by.

CHAPTER X.—Dora Fairchild.

When Harry returned to his wharf the deputy constable, who had relieved the morning officer, told him that he had seen several men loitering in the neighborhood for an hour, but they had made no attempt to come on the wharf.

"They knew better than to do it when they saw you here," replied the boy.

"I guess they did. I should have made short work of them if they had got gay. I have my instructions and would have carried them out to the letter."

Harry was satisfied that he had done the right thing in employing the constables to watch his property, for his enemies were evidently on the alert. The warning they had sent him was not a bluff, and they meant to do him if they could. He kept his eyes open on his way to the cottage

for fear of an ambush, but nothing happened. Sam came over after supper, with his brother, and they walked down to the wharf to see if the night watchman was on the job.

He was, and after talking with him awhile they returned to the cottage. The village paper had given Harry's enterprise quite a puff. Doubtless, his standing advertisement had some influence with the editor and proprietor. Nevertheless, the paper printed nothing but the truth—that the new ferryboat, though lacking the capacity necessary to handle the farmers' patronage properly and at low rates, was a great boom to the village in the emergency to which it had been reduced by the wanton destruction of the Jason boat.

Business continued to improve somewhat during the following week. Every morning the boat was loaded down with crates of farm produce on her first trip over, so that the few passengers he carried were obliged to perch themselves wherever they could find a convenient spot. There was no grumbling on that account, for the men were glad of a means of reaching their work in Chestertown on time. The mail and express matter went through all right, so there was no kick from those quarters. Harry provided folding stools for his passengers who went over on the later trips when there was little or no freight. The trip was so short that nobody but the ladies really cared whether they sat down or not. The engine and machinery attracted considerable attention at first, but this soon wore off and the small mob which at first had gathered around the door of the engine compartment, looking at Harry or Sam running the machinery, melted away before the second week was half over. On several occasions, men whom the boys recognized as boatmen, or their friends, went over and back with him, but the lads kept such a sharp eye on them that if they meditated mischief they were afraid to pull it off.

Harry always carried his revolver in his pocket, while Sam and Billy had small clubs handy, so they were well prepared for trouble. One or the other of the boys sat on the express box, or hovered over the mail bags, when they were aboard, that no harm might come to such important articles. The boatmen, though balked so far, did not give up hopes of getting square with the young ferryman. They figured that he had done them out of a lot of money and their grouch was a strong one. They did all they could to cast ridicule on the new ferry, but the fun did not get much farther than among themselves. During the week, to kind of placate the farmers, Harry sent word to the editor of the village paper, for publication in Saturday's issue, the intimation that as soon as the franchise had been satisfactorily adjusted a boat, superior in many respects to Jason's, would be built and put on the river. On Thursday, Harry heard that two different men were after the franchise with the object of securing the ferry business themselves. This would have worried him but that he knew Senator Fairchild wouldn't let anybody else get it, or if they got it, keep it. On Friday, Harry received word from the Senator that he had secured the transfer of the franchise to him from the builders of the wrecked boat, who held a lien on it to secure the debt, over and above the insurance, owed them by Jason.

They had expected to realize a good price for it, but Senator Fairchild's representative made them an offer and then gave them to understand that if they refused it, or sold it to any one else, that steps would at once be taken to cancel the franchise on the ground that its provision of at least one trip a day had not been complied with since the destruction of the boat.

The manufacturers of the boat declared that this was an unfair advantage which they doubted the courts would uphold under the circumstances, since it was a manifest impossibility to run a boat that was a wreck at the bottom of the river. The Senator's envoy replied that it would hardly pay them to buck against so powerful a politician as his principal, who meant to have the franchise for a friend or get another in place of it.

That settled the matter, and the manufacturers accepted the offer.

They signed the papers which made Harry Haywood the owner of the franchise, and the boy was invited to call on Senator Fairchild as soon as he could and get it. Billy brought Senator Fairchild's letter to Harry, and after the young ferryman had read it he said to Sam:

"I've secured the franchise."

"Have you? That's fine. How much did it cost you?"

"I don't know yet. A big politician got it for me, and I'm to pay him for it on the instalment plan."

"Who is the politician? I didn't know you were acquainted with one."

"You've heard of United States Senator Fairchild?"

"Sure."

"He's the man."

"Did you have the nerve to strike him to get it for you?" asked the surprised Sam.

"Certainly. Why not?" replied Harry, who didn't care to inform his friend of the circumstances that led to his acquaintanceship with the great man.

"He's mighty kind to do you such a big favor."

"Yes, he's a nice man."

"Did you call on him or write to him?"

"I called on him last Sunday afternoon."

"You're all right now. Nobody can run you out."

"No, I don't think they can, but I'll have to put on a real ferryboat just as soon as I can afford the outlay."

"A new boat will cost you quite a bit of money."

"I expect it will. I'm going to communicate with the firm that built Jason's boat and get an estimate and terms for a similar one. It isn't so much the boat as the extra cost of running it. My expenses are very small now and consequently I'm making a good profit out of the enterprise. It fills the bill good enough with the exception of accommodating the farmers, who want to get their stuff over in their wagons at an early hour. Jason made special trips for their accommodation, but there wasn't anything in it, I believe. He felt he had to do it. If he had had a political pull he would have made the farmers accommodate themselves to his arrangements."

"Let the farmers go bag," said Sam. "You'd be a fool to have a boat built for their special accommodation unless you made them pay enough

for transportation. It would be better to lose their patronage altogether. If you got a regular boat you'd have to employ an expert engineer and also a fireman. You'd have to have regular deckhands and other employees. Then there would be a good-sized coal bill as well as a lot of other expenses. I don't wonder that Jason is not anxious to continue the business. There isn't business enough to turn out a profit. Jason just managed to make a living and that's all."

This conversation took place during one of the three-quarters of an hour waits on the village side, and it was now time for the boat to start again. They carried quite a bunch of ladies, this trip, who were going shopping to Chestertown. Harry always tried to make his women passengers as comfortable as possible, and his efforts in that direction seemed to be duly appreciated. With only passengers on board, the boat made the run in a little over ten minutes, three or four minutes less than his schedule.

This was the three o'clock boat, and she didn't start on her return trip till four. The boys had nothing much to do during the interval, and were standing on the wharf, talking, when Harry observed a remarkably pretty and stylishly attired girl approaching the boat.

He broke away from his friends and, lifting his hat, offered to hand her aboard.

"Thank you very much," she said, as Harry opened one of the folding chairs and placed it against the back of the engine house. "Are you Harry Haywood, the owner of this boat?"

"Yes, miss," replied Harry, politely.

"Well, I am Miss Fairchild. You are acquainted with my father, I believe? He has been speaking so much lately about you and your ferry enterprise that I was a little curious to see you and the boat, so I came down to ride across with you."

"I am glad you did, Miss Fairchild. I assure you I appreciate the great honor you have conferred on me by patronizing my boat."

"You are very complimentary, Mr. Haywood," smiled the girl, archly.

"Not at all. It is an honor for me to carry the daughter of so distinguished a man as Senator Fairchild."

"Now you mustn't try to make me conceited, Mr. Haywood."

"I don't think there is any danger of that. You look to be as sensible as you are charming," said Harry gallantly.

"Worse and worse," exclaimed the girl, trying to hide her blushes under a merry laugh. "Really you will spoil me by such compliments."

"Then I will cut them out. You will permit me to apologize for the somewhat antiquated appearance of my boat, but I had her fixed up in a hurry to meet the emergency occasioned by the destruction of the regular ferryboat."

"No apology is necessary, Mr. Haywood. My father says you are to be commended for the quick way in which you came to the rescue of the situation. He remarked that you were about as smart as they come—I am using his words—and a born hustler."

"I admit I am hustling for the dollars."

"I can see that you are a boy of business."

"When I get older I expect to be a man of business. As it is, I'm doing the best I can to establish a future for myself."

"I am sure you will succeed. At any rate, my father said you had all the elements of success. He intends to help you all he can. He told me at breakfast this morning that he had got you the franchise granted to Mr. Jason. He is anxious to help you put on a new boat similar to the one that was blown up. I don't know how long you have been acquainted with my father, but he certainly is taking a remarkable interest in you, which is rather unusual with him."

"It is very kind of him to do so, for I am almost a stranger to him."

"Is it possible?" cried the girl, in surprise. "Why, mother and I thought you must have known him some time. But perhaps your father is a particular friend of his, or has done him some favor which he appreciates."

"No, Miss Fairchild, my father is dead two years. He was not acquainted with your father."

"Well, then, I don't know. It must be your remarkable business abilities that have attracted his notice."

"I don't know that there is anything particularly remarkable about me," laughed Harry. "I'm just a plain, every-day boy, trying to get ahead in the world."

"Plain," said Dora Fairchild, with a coquettish glance that almost paralyzed the young ferryman, "I think you are quite good-looking."

It was Harry's turn to blush at her compliment.

"Would you like to look at the engine that drives this boat?" he said, in some confusion. "We won't start for twenty minutes yet. On this trip we lay over three-quarters of an hour."

"Thank you, I will look at it. Like all girls, I have my share of curiosity," she said, favoring him with another of her bewitching glances.

Harry led her around to the door of the engine-room. He explained the working of the machinery in a few minutes.

"Sam Sanders, my chief assistant, and myself run the engine, alternately," said Harry. "I usually bring the boat over and he takes her back."

"My! how smart you must be to be able to run an engine as well as manage your boat, too! It is really quite an honor to know such a bright young man."

Harry wondered if she really meant that or was just jolly him.

"I must bring my mother down some day, soon, and give her the pleasure of a ride on your boat. I am sure she would enjoy the novelty," added the girl.

"I should be happy to have her for a passenger."

"I suppose, my father has patronized you though he said nothing about it to us," she said.

"No, not as yet. He probably has no business in the village."

"Well, I think he wants to see you."

"Yes, I received a letter from him less than an hour ago, in which he told me he had arranged about the franchise, and asked me to call on him as soon as I could. You may tell him I will call Sunday morning, around eleven."

"I will tell him," she said, as she returned to her seat.

They continued to converse until the arrival of some passengers drew Harry to the wharf. Shortly afterward Sam went into the engine-room and the boat started for the village.

CHAPTER XI.—Harry and His Sisters Are Treated to a Surprise.

Dora Fairchild did not leave the boat on its arrival at Carter's Wharf, as she had merely made the trip out of curiosity to see the boat and its skipper. Harry endeavored to amuse her during the eighteen minutes they remained at the wharf, and the young lady seemed quite taken with the young ferryman. As for Harry, he thought he had never met so lovely a girl, and he sighed to think how far removed he was from her plane in society. He landed her at Tupper's Wharf at a quarter of five. She offered him her daintily gloved hand and said she hoped they would meet again soon.

"Who is the daisy, Harry?" asked Sam, when Miss Fairchild had tripped up the wharf.

"That is Senator Fairchild's daughter," replied Harry.

"You don't say! She's a peach, isn't she?"

"Yes, she's a very fine girl."

"You made up to her in great shape, and she seemed to appreciate your attentions."

"I had to be polite to the Senator's daughter. He got me the franchise, you know."

"That's right. It's a fine thing to have a big politician behind you. It's dollars and cents in your pocket. Here comes my brother helping the expressman with his box. Looks as if it was extra heavy to-day."

The box was placed forward of the engine-house, Billy Sanders shouted: "All aboard for Riverside!" the ropes were released and Sam started the engine.

Two hours passed away and the boat was just hauling out for the village on her last trip when a well-dressed man came running down the wharf, shouting for the ferryboat to stop for him. He carried a small grip in one hand. Harry shouted to Sam to stop, and then to back. His assistant obeyed orders, and as soon as the boat bumped against the wharf the stranger stepped aboard.

"Go ahead, Sam!" cried Harry, and then he collected a nickel from his tardy passenger. "You nearly missed the boat, sir," he said.

"Yes. I'm glad I didn't, for I probably would have had trouble finding a boatman to take me across at this hour," replied the gentleman.

The boat carried quite a crowd on this trip, as the men who lived in Riverside and worked in Chestertown always took that boat.

"If you're going back to-night you'll have to patronize a boatman," said Harry.

"Is this your last trip?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hum! I guess I won't return. I suppose there's a hotel of some kind in Riverside?"

"Yes. The Riverside Inn, on Main street, will accommodate you."

"I suppose you are well acquainted in the village?"

"Yes, sir; I know a great many of the inhabitants."

"Can you direct me to the farm of George Haywood?"

"George Haywood!" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. "He was my father. I am sorry to say he is dead."

"Your father—dead!" ejaculated the gentle-

man. "This is a surprise to me. Is Mrs. Haywood alive?"

"No; my mother died a few months before my father."

"Indeed! May I ask if you were your father's sole heir?"

"No, sir; I have two sisters—one older and one younger than myself. Are you a stranger in this locality?"

"Well, yes; I live in Corinth, about fifty miles west. I'm a lawyer, and my business here was to advise Mr. Haywood of a legacy which had been left him by a man named Cole, and to secure his signature to certain documents I have brought with me."

"Cole! He owns the small farm next to mine, but he left it a few years ago after his wife's death and has never returned."

"He won't return now for he is dead. He willed that farm to your father to make good a debt he owed him. The debt was not a legal one—some kind of sharp practice he worked on Mr. Haywood, but when he found he was dying his conscience troubled him and he decided to make reparation."

"I remember my father had some disagreement with him by which he lost several hundred dollars, which he could not recover through the courts."

"Exactly. Well, my client estimated that the farm he had abandoned would more than make good your father's loss, including interest, so, as I said, he willed it to him. Since Mr. Haywood is dead the property will go to his heirs, as the will reads, 'His heirs and assigns,' which covers the case. What relatives, if any, did your father have beside you and your sisters?"

"None at all, sir."

"That will simplify matters, but before his children can inherit, certain legal procedures will have to be gone through with. I tried to communicate with your father some time ago, but was unable to do so. A day or two ago my first letter to him was returned from the Dead Letter Office. Rather singular it should go astray when you are so well acquainted in the village."

"It certainly is. Did you address it right?"

"I'm sure I did. I've got it in my pocket. I'll show you."

The lawyer, who said his name was Bruce, pulled out the letter.

"Why, you addressed it to Maryland instead of Missouri," said Harry, after looking at the superscription.

"So it is. I did not notice that. That is my clerk's handwriting. It is his fault."

"You'll have to excuse me now, Mr. Bruce, as we are almost at the wharf. Instead of going to the Inn you had better come home with me and meet my sisters. We have a spare chamber which is entirely at your service. After supper we can talk this matter over. It will save you time and trouble, as I am not at home in the daytime," said Harry.

"Thank you. I accept your kind invitation," said the lawyer.

"Then remain on board. The boat goes on to my private wharf, a short distance from our cottage."

Five minutes later the boat was on its way to Haywood's Wharf.

"So you are the proprietor of this ferry, eh?" said the lawyer, resuming the conversation.

"Yes, sir. I started it a couple of weeks ago when the ferryboat that was on the route was blown up by a rascally discharged employee. It is merely a makeshift, but it fills the bill pretty well. I have just secured the ferry franchise, and I expect to put a regular ferryboat on after awhile."

"You seem to be a boy of business," smiled the lawyer.

"A fellow must hustle for the dollars these days if he's going to get ahead in the world," laughed Harry.

"That's so," replied Mr. Bruce. "Your share of this legacy, if the farm is sold, as it probably will have to be, will come in handy for your business, I dare say."

"Yes, sir. I'll need some money to buy the new boat, but I don't imagine my third of the proceeds realized from the Cole farm will amount to a great deal."

"Have you any idea what the farm is worth?"

"In its present shape I don't believe it would fetch over \$600."

"Indeed! Mr. Cole gave me to understand that it was worth about double that."

"I dare say it was when he left it. But you must remember it is very much run down. The house, once a substantial one, is now almost a ruin. There are several years back taxes owing on it. It was advertised some months ago at a tax sale, but nobody seemed to want it badly enough to bid on it the amount of the liens, not a very great sum, as I remember the figures. So, you see, if it is offered at a regular vendue it is doubtful if there will be many bidders, or that any one will offer what the property is really worth."

"At that rate this legacy is likely to prove to be something of a white elephant to you and your sisters," said the lawyer.

"If the matter can be arranged, I should prefer to add the property to my own and make up to my sisters their share in it at its appraised value," said Harry.

"That would not be a bad idea, if you want."

"By adding it to my property and reclaiming it, the united property would have an added value. My farm is too small of itself to tempt a purchaser to buy it at the price I put on it. The same applies to the Cole farm. United, however, as one farm the case is different."

"I see," said the legal gentleman. "You certainly have a great business head. I should never have thought of such a thing."

"Well, you see, you're not a farmer, while I am, after a fashion. At any rate, I know a thing or two about farming property, and, adding a little common sense to my knowledge, I have figured the matter out as I stated it to you."

The boat was now made fast to the private wharf, and after she had been fixed up for the night, with the watchman in charge, the lawyer and the three boys started up the road. Harry's sisters were surprised to find that they had an unexpected visitor on their hands, but his appearance gave them no particular trouble, for they only had to lay another plate and cook some more bacon and eggs, which was the principal dish on the evening's bill-of-fare. During the meal, Harry explained the object of the gentle-

man's visit, and the girls were both surprised and delighted to learn that they, as well as their clever brother, were going to receive an unexpected legacy, even if it did not amount to a very startling sum.

After supper, Mr. Bruce went into the details, telling how Cole's conscience troubled him so much that he felt he couldn't die without making full amends, with something to spare, to the man he had wronged, quite unconscious that that man had preceded him into the shadowy world where he was going fast himself.

The lawyer then explained what measures would have to be taken on account of Mr. Haywood's demise antedating the testator's death.

"It will make no difference in the long run," he said. "You'll only have to wait till the law takes its course before you come into your legacy. The plan suggested by your brother, who may be considered the head of the family, as your father left him the bulk of his estate, of taking over the Cole farm himself instead of sacrificing it at public sale and settling with both of you girls for your share in this property is, I imagine, a wise one. At any rate, his reasons sound sensible and business-like to me, and I will do all I can to fix things so there will be no difficulty in putting the matter through."

The conversation then turned on other matters until the hour for retiring came.

"I won't see you at breakfast, Mr. Bruce, as I have to be aboard my boat before six," said Harry. "Our hired hand will drive you to Carter's Wharf in time to take my boat across on any trip you select. I will see you then, and after that you can communicate with me by letter."

The lawyer nodded, and then Harry showed him to his room.

CHAPTER XII.—Mullen and His Pals Again.

Although Harry was not apt to wake up during the night of his own accord, he was not a heavy sleeper. Any unusual sound, for instance, was almost certain to arouse him. About two o'clock in the morning a sort of rasping and scratching noise took place under Harry's window, which was just above the kitchen addition. The window was partly open both at the bottom and top, for as it was the first week in June the weather was warm. The sounds floated in the silent room, communicated with the boy's sleeping senses and aroused him. He sat bolt upright in bed.

"I'm sure I heard something," he said, listening intently.

The sounds were repeated, and before Harry could decide their character a head appeared at the window and looked in.

"It's all right," the intruder said to somebody behind.

Harry was a bit startled, but he was equal to the emergency. He reached for his trousers, in the hip pocket of which he carried his revolver, drew the weapon, cocked it under the bed-clothes and waited. The man at the window raised his leg across the sill. In another moment he would have been in the room. Before that moment elapsed Harry fired, not with the idea of hitting the man but to frighten him off.

The bullet whizzed close to the chap's ears. The report and the wind of the ball so unnerved the surprised rascal that he lost his hold and tumbled back on the kitchen roof, upsetting his companion, who was behind him. A third man was standing in the yard looking up at them. Such was the picture that presented itself to Harry when he stuck his head out of the window. The two men below him picked themselves up and started to decamp. The man in the yard imitated their example. Harry fired close to the two near at hand and their fright was so great that they almost rolled off the roof to the ground. At any rate, they went down with more speed than grace, and Harry chuckled at their demoralization.

They did not attempt to follow their comrade over the fence, but cut around the corner of the house to avoid another shot, which Harry had no intention of firing, gained the road and hurried away. Harry had recognized the rascal who tried to enter his own room as Jake Mullen and was surprised to know that the three ruffians were still in the neighborhood, for he had not heard from them in over a week.

"That's the fourth time I've done them up," said the boy. "I must be their hoodoo. - If they know when they're well off they'll leave me alone in the future."

The shooting had aroused everybody in the house, and the hired man hastily dressed and knocked on Harry's door.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

Harry explained what had happened and the man repeated his story to Nellie Haywood, who opened her door to find out. The lawyer heard the explanation through his door, and then turned over in bed and went to sleep again. Things quieted down in a few minutes, and in a little while even Harry himself was sleeping as if nothing had happened.

As for the three rascals, they had come together under a tree several hundred yards up the road. They were not in a pleasant humor, particularly Mullen.

"Confound the fellow! he nearly put my pipe out!" snarled the ex-engineer. "Instead of being sound asleep, as I supposed he was, the boy was awake, and he pumped a ball at me so quick that I didn't know where I was till I landed on the roof."

"You woke him up in climbing up to the window," said Beaseley. "Your foot slipped several times on the shingles."

"I didn't make noise enough to wake a fly," growled Mullen. "That kid must sleep with one eye open."

"This is the third time he's got the best of us," said the third man, whose name was Cox. "I don't see any use of you following him up."

"I can't leave these diggin's till I've got square with him."

"You'll have to, or Beaseley and me'll shake you. That boy is nothin' to us, and we don't propose to get pinched just to help you lay him out. If there was any money in it we wouldn't mind, but there isn't. We ought to have made a raid on Owen's house to-night instead of wastin' our time here. We'll have to do it to-morrow night. The old man has money, and we want to get hold of what he keeps in his bureau drawer. We need it badly enough."

"Bet your life we do!" said Beaseley. "Me and Cox are goin' to do the job to-morrow night whether you take hold or not."

"I'm with you, but after it's pulled off I'd like to——"

"You'd like to do a good many things, but as luck doesn't break with us when we tackle this young feller it's time to call it off," said Cox.

"Then you won't help me get revenge on this Haywood?" said Mullen.

"What's the use?" said Beaseley. "Three times we've backed you and we've got it in the neck each time. I know when I've had enough, if you don't."

"So do I," coincided Cox. "The boy is too smart for us."

"Too smart be jiggered! We're bound to fetch him if we keep at it."

"Come on. We're only wastin' time standin' here," said Cox. "Let's get back to the house and turn in."

The men walked a short distance further up the road till they came to a lane overrun with grass and weeds, into which they turned. In the gloom of early morning a fair-sized two-story farmhouse could be seen a short distance back from the road. Apparently this was where the men were bound.

Of course, the first thing Harry told Sam and Billy in the morning when he joined them at the wharf was the visit he had had from Jake Mullen and his pals.

"I thought they had decamped from this neighborhood," said Sam.

"I thought so, too, but it appears they have not."

"I'll bet they're the chaps who robbed Farmer Englewood last night."

"I wouldn't be surprised, for they're not hanging around here for nothing."

"I suppose you'll send word to the constable about them?"

"I certainly will. It's funny that neither he nor his deputies have been able to discover their hiding place."

"The rascals are too smart for them."

Harry then told Sam that the gentlemen who had gone to his cottage with him was a lawyer who had come to tell them about a legacy that had been left to his father or his heirs.

"That means that it will be divided between my sisters and myself," he said.

"You're lucky. Does it amount to much?"

"Not a whole lot. It will pan out a few hundred dollars."

"Every little helps now you are in business for yourself."

"It won't do me much good in my business. The legacy is a piece of land and not money."

"You can sell it and turn it into money."

"It's not in good shape to sell. It wouldn't fetch more than half what it is really worth, and I don't propose to have it sacrificed if I can help it."

Part of this conversation took place while the boat was on its way to Carter's Wharf, pretty well loaded with a shipment from Farmer Whipple. Harry found an unusually large lot of farm stuff waiting for him at his regular landing. He could only take half of it that trip, and that caused a big howl from the representatives of the shippers.

"I can't help it," replied Harry. "You see, there isn't another bit of room aboard. If the stuff was heavy I could not take the load I have. The best I can do for you will be to rush right back as soon as I've unloaded and hurry your stuff over. If I don't have to wait for the mail, which goes across on the next trip, I'll be able to make ten minutes. To do that I'll have to disappoint any passengers who come here expecting to take the seven thirty boat. If I leave at seven thirty they'll have as much right to kick as you. Push off, Sam."

Harry drove the boat across as fast as he could, dumped his freight off in a rush and started back five minutes before his regular time of leaving.

The boat got back to the village at seven five instead of seven twelve, as usual, and Harry hustled the farm stuff aboard. He left at seven twenty, ten minutes ahead of his timetable, as Billy got the mail bag without any wait. As they reached Tupper's Wharf ten minutes ahead of time, Billy didn't have to hustle to and from the Chestertown post-office, as he always had to do. The boat lay until her next regular starting time, which was eight o'clock, and after that ran regularly. Mr. Bruce connected with the nine-thirty boat. He thanked Harry for his hospitality, and said he'd write in a few days, or as soon as he had something more to say in reference to the legacy. The Saturday morning's paper printed an account of the robbery at Farmer Owen's house, and as this was the second burglary in the neighborhood within two weeks the inhabitants were much excited over it, and the head constable came in for a good roasting. The village trustees considered it advisable to send to Chestertown for a detective to help the Riverside force, and the sleuth came over Saturday afternoon and got on the job. Sunday morning, Harry rowed himself across the river and made his way to the home of Senator Fairchild. He found Dora on the veranda.

"Good morning, Miss Fairchild!" said Harry, lifting his hat.

He was now togged out in his best clothes, and the girl thought he looked real handsome and manly.

"Delighted to see you again, Mr. Haywood," she said.

"I have called to see your father according to my promise. I suppose he is at home?"

"Yes; he expects you. Lovely day, isn't it?"

"Fine as silk. You have a beautiful home here."

"Yes. It cost father a lot of money in improvements."

"It's money well spent. It is my ambition to have a fine house and grounds some day myself."

"I'm sure you will have it, then, for you will doubtless succeed in all your undertakings."

"I will if hustling will do it. Shall I ring the bell or will you tell your father I am here?"

"I'll tell him," said the girl.

She soon returned and led Harry to the door of the library. The Senator expressed the pleasure he felt at seeing him again and pointed to a chair. The interview lasted half an hour, and when Harry rose to go he had the ferry franchise in his pocket and the Senator's promise to back him up in his enterprise.

CHAPTER XIII.—Dame Fortune Comes to Harry's Aid.

"I guess I'll take a walk over to the Cole place, sis," he said to his sister Nellie, as the two girls started to clear away the dishes. "I want to see what our legacy looks like—the house, particularly. Originally, it was a better habitation than this, but now it is rather on the hog, to use a slang expression. If Sam comes over, tell him where I've gone and send him over. I haven't told him yet that the Cole place was left to us."

Thus speaking, Harry put on his hat and started for the adjoining piece of property. He entered the same lane that Mullen and his pals had followed, three nights before, and walked up to a broken-down gate that faced a weather-beaten, abandoned farm-house, with a porch about which some climbing plants was growing in profusion. Harry tried the front door, but it was fastened, so he went around to the back to see if he could find entrance there. The door of the kitchen stood slightly ajar. The boy saw that it had been forced by some kind of an implement. He judged that tramps had been there and broken in. Entering the kitchen, he found the room bare of every thing but a rusty stove, which showed signs of recent use. Passing into the next room he saw signs of recent company in three boxes standing in the center of the floor. The middle one, much larger than the others, seemed to have been used for a table, for on it stood a whisky bottle, with a piece of candle stuck into its neck. There were crumbs of dried bread scattered over it.

There was an open fireplace and a grate, with a mantel above it, and on the latter stood a well-worn and dirty deck of playing cards. Lying in the grate were a hammer and a chisel. Harry crossed the wide hall and entered another large room, which he judged had been used by the Coles for a parlor. There was an open grate fireplace here, too, surrounded by a wide wooden mantel. This had evidently been the best room in the house, for the walls were paneled to a height of four feet in white wood with gilt trim. The paneled mantel attracted much attention from Harry. While looking it over the boy noticed a tiny keyhole in the side of it. This indicated the presence there of a small door, but there were no signs of hinges, and so well had the door been fitted that but for the little keyhole, which might easily be overlooked, no one would have supposed one existed there. Harry's curiosity was piqued and he determined to investigate it. Remembering the hammer and chisel he had seen in the room across the hall, he went and got them. It struck him that the whole of the lower panel constituted the door, and driving the chisel in close to the gilt molding, opposite the keyhole, he exerted a little force at that point.

After several attempts the lock snapped and the door swung open, revealing an oblong receptacle, the width of the mantel. In this place lay a box with brass handles that just fitted it. It looked as if it might contain something of value. Harry grabbed the handle at that end and pulled. The box was so heavy that the boy had to use considerable muscular force to draw it out of its hiding place. The box was bound with brass cor-

ner pieces and had an ornamental brass lock. A small, stubby brass key stood in it. Full of curiosity and expectation, Harry turned the key and threw up the cover. One-half of the box held three fat bags, suggestive of coined money. The other half held layers of bank notes. Harry was fairly dazed by this astonishing discovery. A slight tear in one of the bags showed him an American gold eagle peeping out, as if taking a look at its surroundings.

"It couldn't be that Cole owned this, for he was not known to be wealthy. Besides, he would not have left this box here when he went away. No, it must have been the property of the original owner of the house—the old recluse whom I heard died here many years ago. He left the house by will to his old housekeeper. They say he was found dead in his bed after retiring as usual in apparent good health. He used to brag that he expected to live to be 100. The old woman evidently knew nothing about this secret hoard for she sold the property to Cole and went East to some relatives she had there. Now the property belongs to me and my sisters, and, of course, this money is ours, too. By the great hornspoon, we'll be rich!"

Harry had just seized one of the bags of gold coin and was about to lift it out of the chest when he heard a noise and glanced around. Three masked men were stealthily approaching him from the open doorway. Although he could not see their faces he instinctively recognized them as Jake Mullen and his two pals. They had caught him at a disadvantage at last.

"So, Harry Haywood, we've got you, eh?" cried Mullen, triumphantly. "What are you doin' in this—great cats!"

The ruffian stopped in amazement when he caught sight of the open box with the piles of bills and bags of gold. His companions, coming forward, saw the same sight and were just as astonished. Instead of pouncing on the boy, as had been their intention, they stood around and gazed with hungry eyes on the wealth they saw within their grasp. That gave the young ferryman time to recover from the momentary panic their unexpected appearance had thrown him into. Quick as a flash he dropped the bag of gold back into its place, slammed down the cover, locked the box and, dropping the key in his pocket, stood, with the hammer in one hand and the chisel in the other, prepared to protect his property against even the odds that confronted him. The shutting out from their sight of the money broke the spell that had held the rascals, and they were themselves again.

The men were in the act of dashing at the boy when steps were heard in one of the rooms beyond and Sam's voice cried out:

"Harry! oh, Harry, where are you?"

"Here I am, Sam!" cried Harry, eluding the ruffians and rushing to the door.

The bunch sprang after him with cries of anger. Harry slid around outside of the door and as Mullen appeared struck him a blow with his fist. He fell in a heap and his pals, in their haste, not being able to stop quick enough; tumbled over him and sprawled into the hall. That was the extraordinary sight that met Sam's astonished eyes as he appeared at the opposite door.

"Pile in, Sam, and take the club away from

that chap over there," said Harry. "These fellows are Mullen and his crowd."

Sam was a husky lad, and he dropped to the situation at once. He seized the club held by Cox and wrenched it from his grip.

"Now, then, we'll lay those fellow out," said Harry.

The two rascals, however, seeing that Mullen was down and out, dashed past Sam and rushing through the rooms hurried out of the house and ran toward a small wood at the back of the property. The boys let them go, for they were glad to get rid of them, and it was just as well they did. At that moment the Chestertown detective and two constables were searching the wood for the three scamps. When Beaseley and Cox dashed in among the trees they ran into the arms of the officers and were made prisoners. In the meantime, Harry stood guard over Mullen, whom he intended to hand over to justice, while Sam looked around for something with which to tie his arms. He found an old piece of clothes line in a closet and before Mullen fully recovered from the blow which had knocked him down he was a prisoner, without the power to help himself. Harry then, with Sam's help, pushed the rascal into a closet and turned the key on him.

"What brought you here?" asked Sam, curiously.

"I came over to inspect the house."

"What for?" asked Sam, in some surprise.

"Well, you see this property belongs to me now, and my sisters."

"Is that so? Is that the legacy you were telling me about?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do with it now that it's yours?"

"Add it to my farm and fix it up. By the way, I found a chest in that room over there. It's heavy, so I suppose it contains something worth looking into. I want you to help me carry it over to the cottage."

"I'll do it," replied Sam cheerfully.

Harry showed him the box and Sam wondered what was in it.

The boys carried the chest over to the cottage and up into Harry's room. After that the horse was harnessed to the wagon and Jake Mullen was soon en route for the village lock-up. The boys saw quite a crowd around the place and wondered what was going on. When they drove up the crowd recognized Mullen, who was well known, and they set up a shout. Harry pushed his way into the head constable's office and, to his surprise, found Beaseley and Cox, prisoners, there.

"I see you've got two of them, Mr. Brown," said Harry.

"Yes. I only wish we had the head rascal, too, but we'll get him yet."

"Your wish is granted. I've got Mullen outside in my wagon."

"What!" gasped the astonished officer.

"Come out and I'll turn him over to you. Sam and I captured him in the old house on the Cole property."

He followed Harry outside and took charge of the prisoner. Two weeks later Mullen was tried

for blowing up the ferryboat, was convicted and got fifteen years in the State prison. His pals were tried for burglary and they got six years each. Harry said nothing about the contents of the chest, even to his sisters, and next morning went to work as usual aboard his ferryboat.

During the week he sent a letter to the manufacturers of Jason's boat, asking for an estimate on a similar one, with certain improvements. Aware that Harry Haywood was backed by Senator Fairchild, the manufacturers were only too glad to submit their estimate, and Harry, with the knowledge that he owned a third of the money in the chest, the total amount of which he had counted up and found to be \$90,000, had no further reason to hold back from getting a new and first-class ferryboat, which he intended to pay spot cash for. So he gave the order for it. A month later the lawyer called on him again, with the papers that he and his sisters were to sign, which would give them possession of their legacy. The Cole property was appraised and Harry paid each of his sisters a third of its value and added it to his own farm. Then he quietly told the girls that they were each worth \$30,000 more. They couldn't believe him till he showed them the money in the chest and explained how it had come into his possession. Nellie, as guardian for the younger sister, took charge of her share and banked it for her.

Harry's makeshift boat ran all summer, as usual, but in the fall the new boat was delivered by the manufacturers and was immediately put on the route, with Sam Sanders as her steady pilot and his brother Billy as his general assistant. Harry himself looked after the general business of the route, and had an office near the wharf from which he directed matters.

The boy's sudden prosperity surprised Senator Fairchild until Harry explained to him that he had received a legacy which had helped him out of all his financial troubles. Harry became a visitor to the politician's home, and the attraction that drew him there was, of course, Dora, the Senator's daughter. That their friendship developed into mutual love will be no surprise to the reader and a few years later Harry and Dora were married in her father's house. Harry is now a man of business, and a successful one. Though he is worth a lot of money, and his wife will some day inherit her father's wealth, if she lives, he is still running his ferry, now quite an important enterprise, and, as of yore, hustling for the dollars.

Next week's issue will contain "SMART AS THEY COME; or, THE BOSS OF THE WALL STREET MESSENGERS."



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SHORT-STOP SAM

or

The Boss of the Baseball Boys

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CAPTER X.—A False Arrest.

Shortstop Sam was stunned when the officer told him that Len Marks was dead, and that he had died from the effects of the blow he had received Saturday night.

He could not believe it, and, in fact, when he quickly gathered his senses, he did not believe it.

"I guess you are joking with me, officer," he said. "I know I struck Len Marks Saturday night, but I am certain that my blow could not have been the means of killing him. I don't believe he is dead or even injured."

"You don't, eh?" retorted the officer. "Well, you are under arrest, just the same. Now just come along with me peaceably, or I'll have to use my club."

"Oh, I will go with you, all right," Sam answered. "You need not bother to use the club. But I know this is all a big mistake."

"It may be, boy, but I am carrying out my instructions in the matter." The officer's voice softened just a little, for it was plain that it was not to his liking to arrest the young baseball champion.

Pete Perkins stood as though rooted to the sidewalk, while Sam and the officer were talking. He could scarcely believe his senses.

It was not until the officer told the young shortstop to come on that he found the use of his tongue.

"See here!" he exclaimed, "this ain't right, Mr. Policeman! Some of Sam's enemies have been putting up jobs on him, just to make him have the name of being arrested. You just let him go! If you don't you may get into trouble!"

"You come along, too!" he exclaimed. "I'll show you whether I will get into trouble or not."

He made a grab for the lanky third baseman, but was not quick enough to get hold of him.

Away ran Pete, exclaiming as he did so: "It's Jack Cuny and Len Marks who have put up this job on you. Don't let yourself get worried."

Peter never stopped until he reached the office of the Gazette.

He was fortunate enough to find his uncle just going in.

"Hello, Peter!" the editor called out. "What is the matter—you seem to be in an awful hurry?"

"There is a whole lot the matter, uncle," was the reply. "You saw what was in the Recorder about Short-stop Sam and some more of the Peerless Ball Club members, didn't you?"

"Yes, I saw it. It is a pretty hard story, if it is true."

"But it isn't true. That's what I want to see you about. But first, won't you go down to the police station with me? An officer has just ar-

rested Sam for the murder of Len Marks, when he isn't dead or even hurt. His enemies are trying to humiliate him, and they think it smart in putting up a job to get him arrested."

"Is this right, Peter?"

"Yes, sir. I'll take an affidavit that it is."

"Well, to tell the truth, I thought the article in today's Recorder was not true. The way it is written up shows nothing but spite and malice. I have an idea that the publisher received something for publishing it, though I would not want to say so. I will investigate the matter with you, and if it proves that what you say is true the Gazette will cheerfully defend your friend, Short-stop Sam. The Gazette is published in the interest of the whole people; the Recorder caters to what is called 'high society.'"

"Oh, uncle, I'm awful glad to hear you talk that way. Now, come down to the station with me and get Sam out."

"All right, my boy. I came back to do a little writing in the office, but I guess I can spare a few minutes."

Pete Perkins and his uncle were soon making for the station-house.

They got there only a few minutes behind Sam and the officer.

They were just in time to hear the sergeant tell the warden of the jail to lock Sam up on the charge of manslaughter.

"Hold on!" exclaimed the editor of the Gazette.

"Why, hello, Mr. Benton!" answered the sergeant. "What can I do for you?"

The editor was held in high respect by the police. That could have been told at a glance.

"Well, I would like to know on what grounds you are locking that boy up. What is the evidence against him?"

"The evidence is that he struck a young man named Len Marks last Saturday night, and that the said Marks died an hour ago from the effects of the blow. That is manslaughter, you know."

"But who says Marks is dead?"

"It came to us over the wire."

"Who from?"

"Well, we don't exactly know that. The message simply stated that Marks had died from the effects of the blow, and advised us to hunt up the boy who was responsible."

"Is that the way the police of Sharpton do their duty?" said Editor Benton, with a sneer. "I would advise you to find out if Marks is dead, or even hurt, before you arrest any one."

"Well, I happen to know that an undertaker was called at about the same time we were notified," answered the sergeant. "I sent a man to the Marks house right away, and then gave orders for the arrest on sight of Samuel Walters. I think I understand the duties of my office, Mr. Benton."

"Yes, but you say the only information you have received has been through a telephone message, and you do not know the identity of the sender. The man you sent to the Marks house has not got back yet, then?"

"No; but I expect him every minute."

"Well, I am not a lawyer, but I would advise that you let the boy be right where he is until you hear for a fact that Marks is dead."

The sergeant looked around uneasily.

Just then a policeman came in.

He walked right up to the desk, saluted his superior and then said:

"Len Marks is not dead, sergeant; it is all a hoax. I just found him at the saloon of Dan Dauphin. He claims to be entirely ignorant of the report. There is nothing the matter with the young man, either. I understand that the undertaker was stopped by some one before he got to the house."

"I told you to go slow!" exclaimed the editor of the Gazette, shaking his hand, triumphantly.

Short-stop Sam's face lighted up.

"I did not believe that Len Marks was dead," he said, slowly and calmly. "It is a mean, contemptible trick that has been played upon me. They want it reported around town that I was arrested. I want to ask a favor of you, sergeant."

It was the first time the boy had spoken since he came in the station-house, and the sergeant turned to him with the utmost respect.

"What is it, Short-stop Sam?" he asked.

"I want you to write to the editor of the Recorder, over your own signature, and state that I was brought before you on a trumped-up charge; and then, at the same time, I would like you to investigate this matter. It seems that I have enemies who are going altogether too far. If you put a watch on this fellow Marks, and also Jack Cuny, the rich president of the Sharpton Athletic Club, you may be able to sift the matter down pretty quickly."

"You should be careful and not make any statements you are unable to back, my boy," said the sergeant in a kindly voice.

"Oh, I can back any statement I make about those two fellows," answered Sam. "They are both scoundrels, sir."

"Well, that remains to be proven. You are discharged, Sam Walters."

Sam and Pete walked out with the editor, all three in a triumphant way.

The officer who had arrested Sam was considerably abashed, but he nodded pleasantly as they passed him.

Straight to the office of the Gazette they went, and an hour later our hero came out, feeling that he would soon establish his claim to having a good character in the town.

CHAPTER XI.—The Game with Rutcliffe Begins.

When the twelve o'clock whistle blew at Bagley's Mill on Saturday half a dozen newsboys were gathered outside.

"Here yer are! Ther Gazette, jest out! Full account of what happened ter Short-stop Sam! Only three cents! Here yer are!"

As the mill hands came out they began buying the papers.

Almost every man and boy of them was interested in the dashing little short-stop of the Peerless nine. They believed in him, too, and they were eager to see what the paper had to say in his defense.

Editor Benton had certainly written up a rousing article. Dark things were hinted at, but there was nothing that could be taken up as a libel on any particular person.

The names of both Jack Cuny and other members of the swell club were used quite frequently in the article, as was that of Len Marks.

The Recorder was condemned in round terms for not getting the facts before printing the story it had given to the public, and the Gazette challenged it to make an investigation of the case in conjunction with them.

Sam Walters had already seen a copy of the paper, as the office boy had brought it to him while he was at work.

But he did not hesitate to buy a paper of each of the boys just to help them along in their sales.

It was a big day for the Gazette, and it surely was a great one for Sam.

Congratulations were poured upon the boy from every hand as he passed out of the gate and proceeded along the gravel walk for home with several of the Peerless nine.

"What's der matter wid Short-stop Sam, fellers?" sang out one of the newsboys.

"He's all right!" came from the crowd, even the men joining in the cry.

"Who's all right?"

"Short-stop Sam!"

This was very gratifying to our hero, but he was modest about it. He did not get a swelled head right away and try to put on airs, as many would have done.

"I don't deserve all this praise," he said to his fellow members of the team. "I really wish they would stop it."

"Never you mind, old fellow," spoke up Frank Timlin, the pitcher. "You've got more friends in this old town than Jack Cuny could make in seventeen years. As for Len Marks, he always was a sneak, anyhow. He's got to be fired out of the Peerless Baseball Club, and you can bet that action will be taken at the next regular meeting."

Frank was voiced by all hands on this. The boys were certainly rather bitter against the young man who tried to injure Sam in different ways. They all believed that he had given him the drugged mineral water for the sole purpose of making him lose the game for them.

But they had won out, and they meant to win again this day.

The nine scheduled to play with them this afternoon was a college nine from Newhasset. Rutcliffe was the name, and it was supposed to be one of the best amateur teams in the State.

The game had been well advertised, so there was not the least doubt that the grandstand and bleachers would be filled to overflowing.

Sam had neither seen nor heard anything from Cuny or Marks during the week, and he began to think that they were going to let him alone.

But he was mistaken, as will be seen later on.

The Peerless boys went over to the grounds a little early, as it had rained considerable during the week, and they had been unable to get much practice.

Sam was in a very happy frame of mind when he donned his uniform, and went out to pick up a few grounders and limber his arm by throwing some hot ones to first.

(To be continued)

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, AUGUST 10, 1928

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

13 OF 113 HELD KILLERS RECORDED AS INSANE

Since May 17, 1926, 113 persons have been indicted in New York County for first degree murder, District Attorney Banton announced recently.

Of these eight were convicted of first degree murder, while ninety-nine were convicted or pleaded guilty on lesser degrees. Thirteen were adjudged insane.

SEEKS WALKING FISH FOR BUFFALO MUSEUM

An expedition to bring to Buffalo, N. Y., some of the famous walking fish of Siam is planned for this fall by Dr. Charles J. Fish, a director of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences. What is believed to have been the first specimen of this fish brought to this country was obtained last year by a Smithsonian expedition headed by Dr. Hugh M. Smith.

The walking or climbing fish of Siam are perch known as anabas and developed the ability to walk or climb as a result of the streams drying up. They can climb trees and steep canal banks.

Dr. Fish said he hopes to obtain specimens of what is known as lung fish, which when its watery bed dries up digs itself a hole in the ground.

SAVES COIN FOR U. S.—AND FLOWERS FOR GIRLS

J. R. McCarl, Comptroller General of the United States, who cuts bills and saves the Government's pennies, uses his talents for economy outside official business.

One of the hundred or more young women who work in his office forgot to take home a bouquet of roses sent by a friend. She did not remember them until 6 o'clock, too late to return to get the flowers. She telephoned and told a man who answered the telephone about the bouquet.

"Well, what do you want me to do about them?" the man asked.

"If you would just water them, I think they would be all right until tomorrow," the woman said.

"All right, I will attend to it for you."

The next day the clerk was surprised to learn that the Comptroller General, who had been in the office late the day before, received her message, obtained a pitcher of water, climbed two flights of stairs and saved her flowers.

MAINE SEAGULLS ARE CALLED MENACE TO BLUEBERRY CROP

Seagulls, nature's white wings of the sea, are coming in for double displeasure along the Maine coast. Despite their admitted value in keeping the beaches and harbors free from decomposing vegetables and similar matter, the fishermen, whose catches sometimes suffer from the voracious appetites of the birds, have always been prone to curse them roundly and now the blueberry farmers have protested against their depredations until the United States Biological Survey has been driven to seek a remedy.

The farmers know that there is nothing for the growing crops better than fish fertilizer and frequently obtain quantities of "chum," the refuse from sardine factories or fish wharves, and spread it over their fields. If a seagull happens to witness the operation he immediately summons his "gang," and as soon as the farmer has departed they descend with a rush to devour the free lunch. Sometimes they do not even await the completion of the distributing process, assuming that the delectable repast is being served for their especial benefit.

The speed with which a flock of seagulls can remove all traces of the farmer's fish fertilizer is astonishing. As a continuous stream of pulp-wood logs disappears in the maw of the paper mill digester, so does fish fertilizer vanish down the throats of the ravening sea fowl. And since the Federal Migratory Bird act protects these marauders at all times, the farmer may do little more than utter his choicest invectives and "shoo" himself hoarse. Incidentally, a seagull with an appetite will stand a lot of shooing before he can be made to fly.

A still more serious indictment against the seagull lies in the assertion that he is a serious menace to the East Coast blueberry industry. Seagulls are even more partial to blueberries than to fish waste.

When a flock of herring gulls descends on a field of blueberries the luscious fruit melts away like an April snow squall in a noon-day sun. At Millbridge last season Dr. George A. Sawyer asserted the gulls ate \$2,400 worth of his blueberries. Senator Frederick Hale of Maine introduced in Congress a bill providing that the petitioner be awarded the sum asked. The bill was referred to the Claims Committee. And there it rested.

It would be an expensive precedent to allow such a large sum to the owner of a blueberry area. Similar claims would come in thick and fast. But, although the law protects the seagulls it is believed the Federal act may be so amended to prevent such depredations as to permit the agriculturist to protect his crops, with a shotgun, if necessary.

Captain Purdom's Ghost

By JOHN SHERMAN.

Atlanta, Georgia, had surrendered to our victorious arms, and hosts of Federal soldiers were in the city.

The regiment of which I had the honor to be the adjutant was stationed at a small village about ten miles from the city.

The village, so insignificantly small that I forgot the name, was buried in the hills and forests which surrounded it.

We were encamped in a narrow valley with a large forest-clothed hill on the south.

The third night after we had taken quarters at this village was, I think, one of the most terrible I ever saw. I have experienced fiercer storms of wind and rain, heard louder peals of thunder, and seen sharper flashes of lightning; but never in my life did I see a night when clouds looked blacker, or the wind moaned more unnatural through the great forest trees.

It was "the witching hour of night, when graveyards yawn," and I paced in front of my tent.

Sleep that night seemed a stranger to my eyes.

The sentries who paced their regular beats seemed like ghosts even at the short distance from where I stood.

The great black hill to the south looked like a huge mountain that towered to the firmament.

The fierce, dark clouds that flew along the sky were like so many demons.

There was something in the atmosphere that made sleep a stranger to me.

I was not supernatural, but in spite of myself a shudder ran through my frame as I gazed upon the great, dark forest-covered hill on our south.

In the midst of the grove which covered the plateau on the hill-top was what had once been an elegant southern mansion, but what now was merely a tumble-down ruin.

The place showed that once it had been all that wealth could make it.

There were lawns, with graveled walks, overgrown with weeds and grass; a garden and dried-up fountain; a summer-house with one side tumbled in, and the whole place had the appearance of desertion and decay.

Of course it was but natural for soldiers to investigate everything about the camp, and I had already gone over the premises the day after our encampment.

Just the day before, I had paused to listen to an idle story told by some negroes to a group of soldiers.

It was something about the old house on the hill being haunted.

It had been the scene of some fearful tragedy years before.

A rich planter had occupied it, and his only child, a sunny-haired maiden, with large blue eyes, and a fond, loving heart, had for a lover a poor but honest young man from the next village.

Her father had done everything he could to break the match, with the usual result.

There was an elopement and clandestine marriage.

The father brought home the young bride, and she was supposed to have been murdered, as she had never been seen by any one.

The young husband was found at the roadside a few days after murdered.

The wealthy planter had deserted his mansion, and it had fallen to ruins, as we found it.

Strange to say that I, as unsupernatural as I claimed to be, could not on this strangely wild night get that idle story out of my mind.

In spite of myself I found my eyes wandering away toward the hill where the old mansion stood, and a strange, unknown horror seemed to seize me.

While I was abusing myself for being so foolish Captain Felix Purdom, of Company A, whose company was on the outpost, came up to me and said:

"Is that you, adjutant?"

"It is," I replied.

"What are you doing up at this hour?"

"I cannot sleep. I fear I am not well, captain. But what takes you here? Is not your company on the outpost to-night?" I asked.

"It is; but I came in to see the colonel," said the captain, and he paused near enough for the flickering light of the campfire to show how ghostly white his face was.

"Is anything wrong?"

"No, I suppose not; but, adjutant, I cannot force, by any means, a single man of my company to do picket service at that old house on the hill."

"Why?" I asked, though my shudder told me I knew why.

"They swear it is haunted," he replied.

I laughed, and said I thought men who had gone through the Georgia campaign would fear nothing, living or dead.

The captain shook his head, and said he had never seen them before, so he could not lead them anywhere.

I at last proposed that the captain and myself take a file of men, examine the old house from garret to cellar, and discover the cause of those strange cries, sighs and groans.

The captain agreed to my plan, and we went at once to his company quarters.

Captain Purdom's company had suffered fearfully in the campaign, and only twenty-five men were able for duty.

I don't think that ever in my life I saw a more terror-stricken group than those veteran warriors.

It was no physical fear that possessed them, but that strange, unaccountable fear that comes over us when suddenly confronted by what we regard as a thing of another world.

The captain's servant, a negro boy, presented the most ghastly face I ever saw.

No one can imagine how ghastly the face of a terror-struck dandy can be until they have seen one.

Some declared they had seen it—a ghostly corpse, floating in the air, with a loose, flowing robe around it.

Others has heard strange cries and groans, proceeding from the haunted spot.

Detailing a file of soldiers to accompany us, we proceeded up the hill in the direction of the old deserted house.

I did not wonder much that the soldiers had been scared out of their wits.

I never knew what fear was before in my life, though I had faced death in a thousand forms.

The wild night, the inky black clouds, the wailing winds and sighing boughs and tree-tops, all conspired to make the old deserted house seem ten times more terrible than even the superstitious could paint it.

I was in the lead, with Captain Purdom at my side.

Behind us come the four privates, holding their muskets as firmly as their trembling hands would permit.

We passed through the decaying archway into the front yard, there to linger a moment amid the neglected evergreens and tall elms.

Captain Purdom then took two of the men to explore the back yard, while I kept the other two with me.

I was in constant dread lest they would become alarmed and run away.

With the trembling wretches at my heels, and, in fact, my own teeth chattering, we went to the front door and entered the hall.

Never did I hear a sound so hollow as my own first foot-fall in that deserted corridor.

Scarcely had the dread sound broken the still more dreadful silence than a cry—a scream—a shriek, all combined in one, arose in the building, and seemed to make its very rafters shudder.

Before I hardly comprehended what I was about, myself and men were again in the front yard, and the two guards on their knees.

At this moment I heard yells of terror, and Captain Purdom, with his men at his heels, came flying around to our side of the house, almost too terrified to speak.

"What is it?" I gasped, seizing the captain, and shaking him until he recognized me.

"Goodness gracious, adjutant!" he hoarsely whispered, "I never in all my life saw such a thing! I could not believe it if I had not seen it, but I saw it. Oh, how ghastly a sight! Let us leave this awful place!"

"Captain Purdom," said I, somewhat sternly, "you are not acting as becomes an officer. What a nice example you are setting for your men. Come with me. We will capture your ghost."

Somewhat assured by my assumed courage and coolness, he and his men followed me around the building to a rear garden.

As we filed around the corner, that awful scream once more pierced the air, causing us to almost fall down with terror.

"Great Scott, adjutant! There it is again!" cried Captain Purdom, sinking to his knees, and burying his face with his hands.

I looked directly before me, and confess that it took all my nerve to keep from flying.

Suspended about six feet in the air, and float-

ing toward me with arms extended wide apart, was the most ghastly object I had ever beheld.

Three of the guard dropped their guns and fled, the fourth was rooted to the spot, too much terrified to move.

I took a backward step, and in doing so my foot came in contact with a musket which one of the soldiers had dropped.

Instantly seizing it, I fired full at the object still floating toward me.

It did not seem to waver, and, springing forward, I caught it.

Reader, what do you suppose it was?

A shirt suspended on an old clothes line with a pair of pantaloons (the legs of which came below it).

A Zouave cap and red sash had been fastened to it at the top.

A soldier, while exploring the grounds the day before, had fallen into a cistern, and had hung his clothes out to dry.

At the moment I so gallantly caught the ghost for Captain Purdom, a sound of wings was heard above us, and two large owls, whose quiet we had disturbed, flew from the attic window.

The report of my gun, of course, caused a great commotion in camp.

The long roll was sounded, and the order to fall in was given.

When the entire regiment was in line, Captain Purdom and myself walked down to the colonel, who sat in his saddle, sword in hand.

"What is it? How many are there of them?" asked the colonel.

"A false alarm, colonel," said Captain Purdom; "a merely accidental discharge of a musket."

"Is your company sufficient to guard that hill, captain?" asked the colonel. "Do you want any reinforcements?"

"None at all, colonel," answered the captain, and, saluting his superior, he retired.

I slept well the remainder of the night.

The next morning a choice bottle of wine and a note addressed to myself was on the stand in my tent.

The note was as follows:

"Accept this for the present, and if you can keep mum, it will not be the last. I hope we have taken our last ghost hunt. Yours, in confidence.

"FELIX PURDOM."

BOY SCOUTS WILL ASK WOMEN NOT TO SMOKE

Six thousand Cleveland Boy Scouts recently had a new "daily good turn" to add to their opportunities. A resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the Boy Scout Council, and said to be for "psychological reasons," admonished each scout to use his influence to stop cigaret smoking by women.

Scout executives said the scouts would approach women smoking in public and ask them to give up the habit. The executives explained they felt that smoking by women coarsens them and detracts from the ideal of fine motherhood.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

BRIEF BUT POINTED

MECHANICAL ANTIQUES ACQUIRED BY FORD

Trading new machines for old ones, Henry Ford recently acquired four generators from the Grinell mill, New Bedford, Mass., through a representative.

MISS EARHART TO FLY AGAIN

Miss Amelia Earhart is planning to resume flying with herself at the controls within two weeks, Harold Dennison, Quincy airport owner, said today.

The first woman to make a transatlantic flight informed him that she will make her first flight from the Dennison Airport and that she will use the plane she bought from Lady Heath, famous British aviatrix.

The plane is now on its way to this country and probably will be assembled here early next week.

DOMESTIC RUBBER A REALITY SOON, EDISON REVEALS

"The manufacture of domestic rubber will soon be a reality."

With those words Thomas A. Edison recently indicated for the first time at his West Orange plant he is satisfied with the experiments on rubber from weeds and plants which he has been conducting for several months.

It is not known what source of supply Edison contemplates or whether his experiments with plants and weeds have been completed. The statement was made in an interview.

WOMAN STRIKES COPPER ORE ON ISLE IN MANITOBA LAKE

For the first time in the history of Northern Manitoba a woman has made a mineral discovery of importance.

Miss Kathleen Rice, according to the opinion of those who have examined a sample of ore recovered from her claim, has made a rich strike.

The find, which is copper pyrite, was made on Rice Island, near the northwest shore of Lake Wekusko.

The island which has served as a landing place for thousands of prospectors, was known to contain ore but mining men had doubted its value.

COMPARES BARRIERS IN HEARTS TO STRADDLING OF PLATFORMS

The Rev. Dr. John R. MacKay, formerly pastor of the North Presbyterian Church of New York and now living in Pasadena, Cal., preached yesterday morning at the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Ninety-first Street and West End Avenue, on "Barriers Burned Away."

"Even as both political parties are straddling the prohibition question, one a little worse than the other," said Dr. MacKay, "so are we who refuse to burn away the barriers that keep us from Jesus straddling the question of our future happiness. If we can but rid ourselves of inhibi-

tions and the barriers in our hearts, then we will be able to see the real Jesus."

WOMEN TO GO UNVEILED, BOSNIAN MOSLEMS RULE

Following Turkey's example, the Supreme Moslem Synod of Bosnia has decided to abolish the feminine veil. At further sittings the Synod will consider the movement in favor of monogamy for both sexes.

The veil will be replaced by a modified form of the charshaf, which is an attractive one-piece headdress enveloping the head and shoulders, but leaving the face entirely uncovered.

Announcement that the Prophet Mahommed's prohibition has been relegated to history caused joy among the new generation of Moslem women who now, however, are clamoring for bobbed hair, short skirts, high-heeled shoes and Parisian hats.

PENNSYLVANIA WORK ACCIDENTS COST 1,149 LIVES FOR HALF YEAR

Industrial accidents in Pennsylvania during the first half of 1928 took a toll of 1,149 lives, an increase of 10 per cent. over the corresponding period last year, according to reports of the Department of Labor and Industry made public today.

The mine disaster at Mather on May 19, causing 194 deaths, was the most costly single accident. Bituminous mining was credited with being responsible for the largest number of fatal accidents, 374 having been killed in soft coal mines. In the anthracite field the number of fatalities ranked third on the list.

Eighteen firemen and fourteen policemen were killed in the performance of their duties.

TO STUDY TRAFFIC DIVISIONS

Relation of traffic departments to the efficient conduct of modern business will be studied by the transportation division of the Department of Commerce in an effort to determine the place of industrial traffic management as a factor in the elimination of waste in the distribution of merchandise, it was announced.

In the study, which will be started immediately, it is proposed to collect facts and figures on the movement of merchandise by railway, airway, waterway and highway.

Waste resulting from inadequate attention to traffic matters, elimination of avoidable waste through scientific traffic management, size of industry necessitating establishment of separate traffic department, cost of maintaining a traffic department, relation of a traffic department to other branches of business and the relative importance of traffic management are some of the major phases of the study.

Wayne E. Butterbaugh Professor of Transportation at the University of Minnesota, will conduct the study under the direction of Norman E. Titus, chief of the transportation division. The final report is expected to be ready in 1929.

CURRENT NEWS

FOUR GENERATIONS HELPED MAKE LINEN GIFT FOR JERSEY WOMAN

An interesting bit of linen fabric, which took the work of four generations to bring to its present state of usefulness, is being exhibited to friends by Mrs. George McGrath of Butler.

It is a linen luncheon cloth, hand-embroidered with an original design in vari-colored silk thread. The cloth was a gift to Mrs. McGrath from an aunt who arrived recently from Sweden. It was made of flax grown on the farm of Mrs. McGrath's great-grandfather. The thread was spun by her grandmother, the cloth was hand-woven by her aunt and the embroidery was done by her niece.

HIGH PRICE OF BRIDES WORRIES SYRIAN YOUTHS

The high price of brides is beginning to worry young and marriageable men in the East.

A mass meeting held here recently elected a committee to seek a modification of the custom requiring the man who would marry to pay a handsome sum of money to the father of the girl of his choice.

The men working for the reform say that they are not impelled by selfish motives, but are interested in the welfare of the State. Marriages, they say, are on the decrease owing to the greed of parents who have been raising prices in the marriage markets.

WORLD'S SMALLEST RESTAURANT HAS ONLY ONE TABLE

The smallest restaurant in the world, long nameless, has just been christened "The Restaurant of the Wet Feet."

This Lilliputian establishment, located in Montmartre, consists of one table and is patronized chiefly by midinettes. At one side of the table there is barely room for the proprietress and her stove. Some guests find no room and take their food into a near-by cafe.

The name "Wet Feet" resulted from the fact that the owner is constantly scrubbing the floor.

LAST FUNERAL CAR PASSES

A funeral service, begun on the New York Central Railroad more than three decades ago, long before the luxurious funeral limousines of today were even thought of, has definitely ended with the remodeling of the last of the company's funeral cars, old 17. It has been converted into a boarding car, to be used in the maintenance-of-way department.

Built in 1901 as a club car, it was later turned over to the funeral service from New York to the Kensico and Woodlawn cemeteries. Its construction was suited to such service, the small compartment in the end being used for the coffin and the club compartment for relatives and friends accompanying the body.

Gradually the funeral cars were less in demand

and stood in disuse in the Mott Haven and West Albany yards. One by one they were converted to other uses, such as eye-test cars and boarding cars. Thus 17, as far as is known the last of its kind in this country, passes from existence.

CHILD MOTOR DEATHS SHOW BIG DECREASE

Deputy Police Commissioner Philip D. Hoyt, Chairman of the Police Traffic Board, issued a statement recently revealing that deaths of children sixteen and under resulting from highway accidents in New York were 20.5 per cent. less during the first six months of 1928 than for the corresponding period in 1927. Fatalities to persons over sixteen increased 4.8 per cent.

"In the case of children," Hoyt said, "highway fatalities for the first half of 1928 totaled 166, while the deaths during the first half of 1927 totaled 209. The fatalities for those over sixteen totaled 345 in 1928, as compared with 329 for the corresponding period in 1927.

"There has been a continuing reduction in deaths of children from highway accidents in New York City for several years. In 1923 there were 453 highway fatalities to children. Last year reached a new low mark of 408, although in four years, 1923 to 1927, the number of cars registered in the city increased from 350,000 to 648,000, and the population increased from 5,000,000 to 6,000,000.

U. S. FARTHEST NORTH SCHOOL HOUSE TO BE REBUILT FOR ESKIMO CLASS

When the Government vessel Boxer sails from Seattle on its next voyage to Alaska it will carry materials for a school house at Point Barrow, where the mainland of North America protrudes farthest into the Arctic.

This vessel is owned and operated by the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior. Its customary mission is to carry supplies and personnel to outlying points in Alaska.

The school house at Point Barrow burned down last January and building materials could not be sent until the ice cleared away. Likewise it was necessary to await action by Congress, which in the closing hours of the last session provided an appropriation of \$16,000.

At Point Barrow the American teacher has seventy-two Eskimo pupils. When the school house was burned down the teacher moved his brood into a storeroom and continued his work. The home of the teacher and his family was in rooms added to the old school house. Since the fire they have had to live in an Eskimo house.

A boss carpenter will go north with the materials and remain over the severe winter. His only assistants in the building operations will be thirty or forty Eskimo boys who attend the school. They are said to have a genius for carpentry as the result of centuries of sled making. Bureau officials think that the manual training instruction which the Eskimo boys will receive under the boss carpenter from the United States will be the most practical year of schooling in all their careers.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

— Latest Issues —

- 1142 A Mad Broker's Scheme; or, The Corner that Couldn't Be Worked.
- 1143 Dollars From Dust; or, The Boys Who Worked a Silver Mine.
- 1144 Billy Black, the Broker's Son; or, The Worst Boy in Wall Street.
- 1145 Adrift In the Sea; or, The Treasure of Lone Reef.
- 1146 The Young Wall Street Jonah; or, The Boy Who Puzzled the Brokers.
- 1147 Wireless Will; or, The Success of a Young Telegraph Operator.
- 1148 Wall Street Jones; or Trimming the Tricky Traders.
- 1149 Fred the Faker; or, The Success of a Young Street Merchant.
- 1150 The Lad From 'Frisco; or, Pushing the "Big Bonanza."
- 1151 The Lure of Gold; or, The Treasure of Coffin Rock.
- 1152 Money Maker Mack; or, The Boy Who Smashed a Wall Street "Ring."
- 1153 Missing For a Year; or, Making a Fortune in Diamonds.
- 1154 Phil, the Plunger, or; A Nervy Boy's Game of Chance.
- 1155 Samson, the Boy Blacksmith; or, From the Anvil to Fortune.
- 1156 Bob's Big Risk; or, The Chance That Came But Once.
- 1157 Stranded in the Gold Fields; or, The Treasure of Van Dieman's Land.
- 1158 "Old Mystery," the Broker; or, Playing a Daring Game.
- 1159 Capital, One Dime; or, Boring His Way to Fortune.
- 1160 Up Against a Hot Game; or, Two College Chums in Wall Street.
- 1161 A Big Contract; or, The Poor Boy Who Won.
- 1162 Benson's New Boy; or, Whooping up the Wall Street Market.
- 1163 Driven to Work; or, A Fortune From a Shoestring.
- 1164 The Way to Make Money; or, Taking Chances in Wall Street.
- 1165 Making His Fortune; or, The Deal of a Plucky Boy.
- 1166 The Stock Exchange Boys; or, The Young Speculators of Wall Street.
- 1167 Seven Bags of Gold; or, How a Plucky Boy Got Rich.
- 1167 Dick, The Wall Street Waif; or, From Newsboy to Stockbroker.
- 1169 Adrift on the Orinoco; or, The Treasure of the Desert.
- 1170 Silent Sam of Wall Street; or, A Wonderful Run of Luck.
- 1171 Always on the Move; or, The Luck of Messenger 99.
- 1172 Happy-Go-Lucky Jack; or, The Boy Who Fooled the Wall Street Brokers.
- 1173 Learning a Trade; or, On the Road to Fortune.
- 1174 Buying on Margin; or, The Boy Who Won the Money.
- 1175 Joe Darcy's Treasure Hunt; or, The Secret of the Island Cave.
- 1176 A "Live" Boy; or, Quick to Get the Dollars.
- 1177 "A Barrel of Coin; or, The Luck of a Boy Trader."
- 1178 "Driven to the Wall; or, The Nerve of a Wall Street Boy."
- 1179 "Johnny the Parcel Boy; or, The Lad Who Saved the Firm."
- 1180 Going to the Limit; or, A Big Risk For Big Money.
- 1181 Up To Him; or, Running His Father's Business.
- 1182 "Back-Number Bixby"; or, The Boy Who Was Up to the Minute.
- 1183 A Young Barnum; or, Striking It Rich in the Show Business.
- 1184 The Brotherhood of Gold; or, A Daring Wall Street Game.
- 1185 Ed, the Express Boy; or, His Own Route to Fortune.
- 1186 The Stolen Bonds; or, How Wall Street Will Made His Mark.
- 1187 A Favorite of Fate; or, After the Head Hunters' Treasure.
- 1188 Master of the Market; or, The Boy Who Cornered the Stock.
- 1189 Landing on His Feet; or, The Pluckiest Boy in the World.
- 1190 \$50,000 From a Nickel, or, the Boy Who Was Lucky in Stocks.
- 1191 Born Lucky; or, From Miner to Millionaire.
- No. 1192 Hal Halman's Tip; or, Scooping the Wall Street Market.

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